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THE IMPACT OF ATHLETIC COACHES' ETHICAL BEHAVIOR ON POST-  
COMPETITIVE ATHLETES

by

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Education  
in the Department of Learning Sciences & Educational Research  
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at the University of Central Florida  
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Major Professors: Carolyn Hopp and Thomas Vitale

## **ABSTRACT**

Much of the literature regarding abuse in athletics has focused on the effects these actions have on the athletes both short and long term. In relation to ethics, such research has been primarily focused on how ethics effects all aspects of athletics. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine if factors that cause coaches to victimize athletes are related to a lack of ethical understanding. This qualitative phenomenological research design was used to highlight emerging themes revealed during the study. Thirteen purposely selected individuals, labeled as athlete, athlete/coach, or coach, participated in one-on-one semi structured interviews. The participants' interviews were conducted independently, reflecting a wide range of opinions and experiences.

The conceptual framework included the theories of self-perception and Nash's Three Moral Languages that guide ethical behavior. The use of the seven constructs as identifiers allowed for recommendations for athletes, coaches, the National Governing Bodies (NGB's), and the United States Olympic Committee.

For athletes, high-achieving or otherwise, this study provided a perspective into not only what allowed these individuals to achieve their athletic and coaching goals, but also a view into the issues they faced related to abuse and experiencing unethical situations. For coaches, their beliefs of what is acceptable behavior of athlete and coach is apparent to others on the field of play. However, their own self-perception of what is acceptable might be completely different. The ability to act ethically is dependent on coaches connecting their own actions to decisions that would be considered ethical according to the rules or guidelines of their sport.

Recommendations include areas regarding teaching ethics to athletes as part of sports programs beginning in the early years of education, and better educating coaches to not put themselves in unethical situations. Though education is a factor in the quality of life post athletics, this and other research studies suggest that abuse of athletes can cause mental, physical, and emotional issues as these individuals transition into life post-athletics.

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theories and you always understood them. I hope this work can give your soul a little bit of peace in the chaos.

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find out more about you but asking myself, “What would Dr. Walker do?” I have been honored to cross paths with some of your former athletes and family members and the way they speak of you is inspiring. I write this work in honor of your legacy.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge every person that has ever been a victim of abuse of any form. Every single one of us deserves safety and not all of us have been provided this. I wake up every day fighting for this and I will not stop. I support each one of you.

We, as a society, must do better to protect those who are in a position of weakness in that which is an imbalance of power. Life is hard enough without added abuse; athletics should provide an outlet from this not a place for it to fester. It is up to us to make this change and I challenge everyone to be a part of that change.

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## **ANECDOTE**

A young girl cries at the dinner table expressing her will to quit the sport she loves so much. The lack of understanding to why anyone at her level would want to just stop is not comprehended. Even as the tears flow, he continues to encourage the girl to continue to strive for her goals and reach for the stars.

Months go by and it becomes more evident that the girl does not want to go to practice anymore. He continues to enquire why, but these enquires come upon deaf ears. She continues to show signs of her not being herself and her personality is changing. He passes these changes off as part of growing up and ignores the signs that something is wrong beyond the sport itself.

At a tournament in mid-fall, a member of the girls' club addresses this issue and makes the claim that the girl is being mistreated by her club owner expressing such acts as cussing, calling her lazy and a fat ass, and bullying her to the point where she would shut down. He was concerned but believed that it was just a part of getting better performance out of her, because his history in athletics was experienced in the same way. Later in the fall, other members of the club started to express their concern over these same acts that they witnessed. This was the point where he started to enquire into what was going on with her. He had been with her every step of the way during this journey, his belief was that this was common practice in the coaching profession.

At the end of the season, she expressed her will to quit the sport again. This time she expressed her displeasure with the club, the coaches, and the club owner. The decision was made that she would move to a different club, 120 miles away, for her to continue her training. This

change did help, but there was still something not right. No one wanted to see her quit, but it was at this point he had to address these issues that were expressed by individuals that looked at the situation from a different view seriously.

He began to reach out to those whose children showed the same types of problems in sport. Multiple families from all over the United States and Canada contacted him and shared their stories of bullying in sports. These stories seemed so familiar to him. Stories of children quitting, having nightmares, not sleeping, and having angry outbursts over things that would have never bothers these kids before. This scared him because he was there for almost every practice and tournament she had every participated in. As the feeling of guilt began to overwhelm him, they made the choice for her to enter therapy to see what was really going on.

After the first three sessions, the psychiatrist asked to speak with him privately. When the first question was asked, “Tell me about her sport” his stomach sank. It was this point that it registered to him what happened. He believed his ignorance caused her pain and heartache that she may never recover from. He could only imagine how she felt; The betrayal, the harm, the lack of trust. She continued therapy for many months as she tried to deal with these issues and continue competing.

As the following season began, the issues continued as she had to be in the presents of those who caused her harm. They did not show remorse and used the issue to try and cause her more harm through their other athletes, yelling while she was competing, and being obnoxious. For months there was not a tournament that she competed at that tears did not flow, her anger

would be unleashed, or her expression of a lack of understanding for why these individuals continued to cause her harm.

He finally tried to address the issue directly when he realized he could not. Not knowing why, he was unable to stand up to these bullies, he began to immerse himself in information regarding these issues when it registered; He had been a victim himself as a child. Having to relive these experiences from his past was too hard that he had buried them rather than dealing with them.

As time moves forward, both can now address their issues in different manners, but they share a common bond. This girl is my daughter.



## **DISCLAIMER**

There are many issues and obstacles that every researcher and research area must overcome to find the answers that are not only wanted, but sometimes needed to create change. Within sport, one such problem related to this area of research is the lack of cooperation by sports agencies and governing bodies across sports to provide statistical data.

Historically, these institutions were unwilling to participate in studies and governments would prevent surveys, of coaches and athletes, from being conducted in turn preventing change because of the lack of data. During a keynote address to the conference ‘How Safe is Your Sport’, Celia Brackridge (2010) stated, “It was difficult to get sport to provide any data on this subject, and difficult to persuade the child protection agencies that there was a problem in sport. I could not get permission to do a survey across sports but could not persuade the government to do anything without such data” (p.1).

This type of statement is echoed by this researcher who is attempting to create change within sports. Nonetheless, my goal is that future works will build on this collection of information which in time will provide substance for later works. For the purposes of this dissertation, the lack of information and data has provided many obstacles but allowed for much cross-subject comparison for support.

## CHAPTER ONE

*The purpose of this Dissertation in Practice was to examine if factors that cause coaches to victimize or abuse athletes are related to personality or learned traits from their own experiences as athletes. Claims of abuse and open court cases have become an almost daily occurrence in the news and many of the major headlines have been related to coaches and trainers that have either physically, mentally, or sexually abused current and former athletes. Children begin to develop their athletic prowess at an early age and experience mentoring by adults some of whom have been athletes, others who are passionate about a sport.*

### Problem Statement

Because of the profound influence that coaches can have on athletes and the organizations with which they are affiliated, the problem of practice that this Dissertation in Practice will address is the identification of experiences that cause coaches' attitudes and behavior to impact ethical behavior in post-competitive athletes.

### Significance of the Problem

The coaching profession has evolved since sport was introduced to the masses. It is generally accepted that not only have the techniques of coaching a sport changed but the manner that coaches address, organize, and lead their athletes has also transformed. Sports psychologist Caroline Silby, during an interview with the *USA Today* stated, "Coaches today have to spend a little bit more time providing a rational. A lot of it is generational" (Hider, 2013, n.p.). While

today's athletes anticipate a more meaningful experience, this will require a shift in coaching methods from less screaming to more teaching.

This generational change is not only limited to the athletes but also the coaches. As a lot of coaches' transition from athlete to coach, the methods they apply to their coaching style may not be as effective as they were for their coaches. This should indicate a transition of coaching styles and methods of motivation. These new types of coaching styles and motivations will not allow for the coaches to victimize the athletes by bullying to produce results. As research becomes more available to the damage bullying actions cause long-term on the athletes, the focus has changed from 'man up' to 'I understand'. However, it is not clear whether the use of a more transformational leadership methods can be attained by the athletes who compete under these abusive coaches or if it must be learned during the time the athlete is competing.

Bullying by coaches, in some cases, is now considered criminal. When bullying is properly defined, it is sometimes compared to assault, battery, harassment, or criminal mischief. These forms of victimization have been contested in courts for decades and as the movement, for bullying to become a criminal offense intensifies, it is important for the coaching profession to evolve with the laws.

Legal cases brought forth by athletes regarding coaches bullying have been attempted. A lawsuit has been filed by three student-athletes against a high school football coach in Reno, Nevada alleging that they were victims of bullying (Hille, 2017). The victims state that after standing up to the coach they were kicked off the football team. These victims presented this information to the high school principal who stated that though bullying is prohibited in the

classroom, it is permissible on the football field (Coble, 2017). The athletes' attorney claim that the legality of this case rests upon the assumption that athletes cannot be bullied by coaches.

Coaches are not only susceptible to being sued for bullying but can potentially be sued for not intervening or preventing bullying between individuals on the teams they coach. An example of this was in Oakland Park, Illinois where a high school female basketball player and her family filed a \$500,000 lawsuit against both the coach of the team and the school for failing to intervene to prevent the acts of bullying against the victim which lead to post-traumatic stress disorder. Acts that the victim claimed lead to physical assault and foot surgery which were witnessed by the coach of record (CBS News Live from the Broadcast Center, 2012). The initial decision and the appeal were found in favor of the defendant due to, among other issues, the claim did not fit the description that the school system had provided of bullying and was agreed upon by the family prior to the beginning of the school year (Mulvey v. Carl Sandburg High School, 2016).

### Positionality

#### Experience as an Athlete

At different points in my life I have competed at many different levels in multiple sports. Within the education system, I competed in intramural level sports such as basketball, flag football, and hockey. These sports were governed by the school board of Foxboro, Massachusetts and run by the physical education teachers in the schools.

While in this educational system, I was a victim of bullying (both physical and mental) by the coaches and other students. I was personally told that it was part of growing up and it was

done to make me tougher. Over 25 years later, while returning to college to study sports science, I found myself revisiting the way in which I was victimized and the continued issues emerging from these actions. Though no visual harm can be seen, certain experiences later in life (one of which happened at the university level) continued to cause these emotions to return.

Outside of the education system I competed at a national and international level in bowling later becoming a member of the Professional Bowlers Association. Later in life, I began competing and training in the sport of fencing as an epeeist competing at the local and regional levels.

### *Experience as a Coach*

At different points in my life, I have coached the sport of bowling through the Youth American Bowling Alliance (YABA, later becoming part of the USA Bowling) and the American Bowling Conference. These experiences including all genders, age ranges, and competitive levels.

At age 35, I began to coach the sport of fencing as a conditioning coach and strip coach for a fencing club that will remain anonymous. I became a professional member of the United States Fencing Association (USFA) and have coached multiple national and international competitors.

During my time as a fencing coach, I noticed that I was coaching in the manner that I was coached as a child. This method was the type of coaching that had caused me harm as a child and the pattern of behavior was learned from those prior. In 2014, I began to study different methods

of coaching at the University of Central Florida and changed my methods. Though I cannot return and change the things that I did to those athletes, I have changed the future pattern of my coaching conduct to hopefully prevent the harm to others in the future.

### *Experience as a Parent*

My experience in sports as a parent of two female fencers covers many levels of competition and age demographics. One, currently 8 years old, competes at a youth level and currently in a fun non-competitive environment. The other, currently 17 years old, is a 3-time Junior Olympian and a national competitor on a yearly basis.

In 2015, I was informed that one of my daughters was being bullied/victimized by her coach. These scares cannot be seen, however, the damage it has caused her and the loss of her love for the sport has changed the experience that youth sports should provide.

The experience as a parent having one of my daughters bullied/victimized by a coach allows me to understand the outside view of athlete victimization and the harm it causes, both short and long-term to individual victims.

### *The Relationship to Education*

Plato argues that future ‘guardians’ and ‘rulers’ of the republic go through a period completely devoted to athletic training, because grueling physical activity and the time needed to recover from these activities ‘are the enemy of study’ (Harden, 2010, p.89). The education systems in the United States couples athletics with schooling, it includes those students of school age in the creation of sports teams and organizations. Youth can begin competitive sports in

some cases even before they begin kindergarten and continue all through college and beyond. Sports teams are built into the education system as a form of competition between schools outside of the academic realm and are usually coached by teachers that are employed by said school.

Research in athletics up until the late 2000's was classified as 'extracurricular activities,' which also included other forms of group activity outside of athletics such as chess club, mathletes, music, and drama. Studies conducted by Marsh (1992), Neish (1993), Klesse (1994), McCarthy (2000), Branch (2003), and VanDuyne (2004) concluded that the participation in extracurricular activities in high school aged students was linked to higher GPA's, test scores, and graduation rates.

Discussing the link between education and athletics in the United States is not only structurally significant, but a logical comparison can be made to the education system. The education system offers the same type of structural format Teacher-to-Student (Leader-to-Learner) as the athletic environment Coach-to-Athlete (Leader-to-Learner). This leader to learner format creates an extreme asymmetry of power in the form of the coach(s)/teacher(s) having a distinct power supremacy over the athlete(s)/student(s).

### *Academics and Athletics*

Educational institutions and extracurricular activities have been associated with each other for multiple reasons. In 1978, Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of attitudes toward public schools showed that 45% of respondents believed that extracurricular activities were important in schools. In subsequent years, the belief in extracurricular activities being important dropped to

31% in 1984, then increased to 39% in 1985, before making a significant increase to 63% in 1997 (Rose, Gallup, & Elam, 1997). Though extracurricular activities are not exclusive to school funded athletic programs, public schools did increase emphasis on such activities.

Author and Historian Peter Sterns states that in the 1960's, the growing frenzy over college entrance into certain schools that the parents believed their children belonged, created an environment of competitive frenzy (Sterns, 2004). This parental anxiety not only changed the environment of sport in the K-12 environment, but also the socio-economic environment from the prior century. Historically, children of lower-class families, often immigrants living in big cities, competed in competitive sports and tournaments under non-parental adult supervision while upper-class children participated in noncompetitive activities. This shifted so that sports suddenly became important for college entrance: "It's thanks to changes in the 20th-century educational system—like compulsory schooling, the self-esteem movement, and higher-stakes college admissions—that this is how American families are spending leisure time today" (Friedman, 2013, n.p.).

Sports in the American education system could be viewed as more for the entertainment of adults, rather than to create an environment of growth for the children who participate. John O'Sullivan writes, "I find it sad that we trade in the health and safety of our kids for the adult need to be entertained and get a return on our investment, yet that is exactly what we do" (O'Sullivan, 2015). When the pressures of competitive higher education combine with that of the need for success in sports to justify acceptance the harboring of victimization becomes tolerable in the educational environment.



### Grade Point Average and Standardized Testing

The indications that extracurricular activities might directly correlate to academic success lends its support to suggest that athletes will outperform non-athletes in academics. Research indicates that both male and female athletes reported higher grade point average (GPA) than their non-athlete counterparts at the high school level with female athletes and non-athletes reporting higher GPA's than their male counterparts (Lumpkin & Favor, 2012). These findings support the findings by JacAngelo (2003) who not only discovered a higher GPA for athletes over non-athletes in Miami-Dade schools during the 2002-2003 school year, but also learned that athletes obtained higher test scores on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test in reading and mathematics.

During the 2008-2009 academic year, researchers compared ACT scores between athletes and non-athletes finding that male non-athletes scored significantly higher on their combined scores than did male athletes. These findings were opposite for the female athletes who scored significantly higher than female non-athletes on the same testing format (Lumpkin & Favor, 2012). Though the NCAA has standards related to freshman year eligibility, suggestions in these findings could indicate a mentality shift between genders allowing for gender inequality in college acceptance of athletes. This could indicate that female athletes could believe they withstand more bullying or victimization to obtain entrance into colleges and acceptance by the athletic programs at such institutions.

## Graduation Rate

### *High School*

The distinct benefit of sports in schools has been looked at from different views such as activity levels, health, and academic grades. The suggestion that athletes in high school have an easier time passing classes or are provided special consideration because they are athletes has been found to be true in special cases (Lumpkin & Favor, 2012).

Lumpkin and Favor (2012) completed research of the state of Kansas high school system comparing athlete to non-athlete graduation rates. The findings showed that of the 2,016 students that dropped out of high school during the 2008-2009 school year, 94% were non-athletes. Lumpkin and Favor also considered the graduation rates between athletes and non-athletes and found that 97.6% of Grade 12 athletes in the state of Kansas during the 2008-2009 school year graduated compared to 88.1% of non-athletes respectfully. “Athletic competition does not make a student smarter, the lessons learned in athletics, combined with the knowledge that they must do well in school to participate, improves students’ persistence and chances for success” (Krings, 2014, n.p.).

With research indicating the increased potential for academic success of those who participate in athletics in high school compared to those that do not, the issue of bullying by coaches in sports becomes an academic issue. Athletes that decide to no longer participate in sports before or during this age demographic are hindering not only their academic growth, but also potential future earnings and successes.

### Financial Considerations of Athletes

The nature of the athletic scholarship places potential victims under considerable pressure to conform. The student-athlete is not considered an employee and is unable to seek redress under typical employment law. The one-year renewable scholarship prevents any protection from retaliation against an athlete who might choose to become a whistle-blower about incidents of bullying or other forms of victimization. Constitutional bylaws in college athletics fail the victim because there are no “clearly established” rules to protect those that choose to speak out against their coaches or other athletes and no priority right of their scholarship being renewed (Hermandorfer, 2014).

The scholarships that are offered and awarded to athletes can become a factor in the amount of abuse the athlete is willing to endure as well as the amount of abuse the coach feels justified in offering. Lisa Herbertson, a former college softball player at a top-ranked college, stated, “He recruited me right out of high school and at the age of 18, I joined the ranks of the elite. I felt humbled, honored and very grateful for the generous scholarship I was awarded. When it came to my sport, I was obedient to a fault: “Yes, coach...no, coach...whatever you say, coach” (Herbertson, 2013, n.p.). After an injury, the coach had made comments about wishing she would quit so he could give the money to a healthy pitcher, not being mentally tough enough to handle an injury, and that she should have been begging to attend games, so she could wash his dirty underwear (Herbertson, 2013).

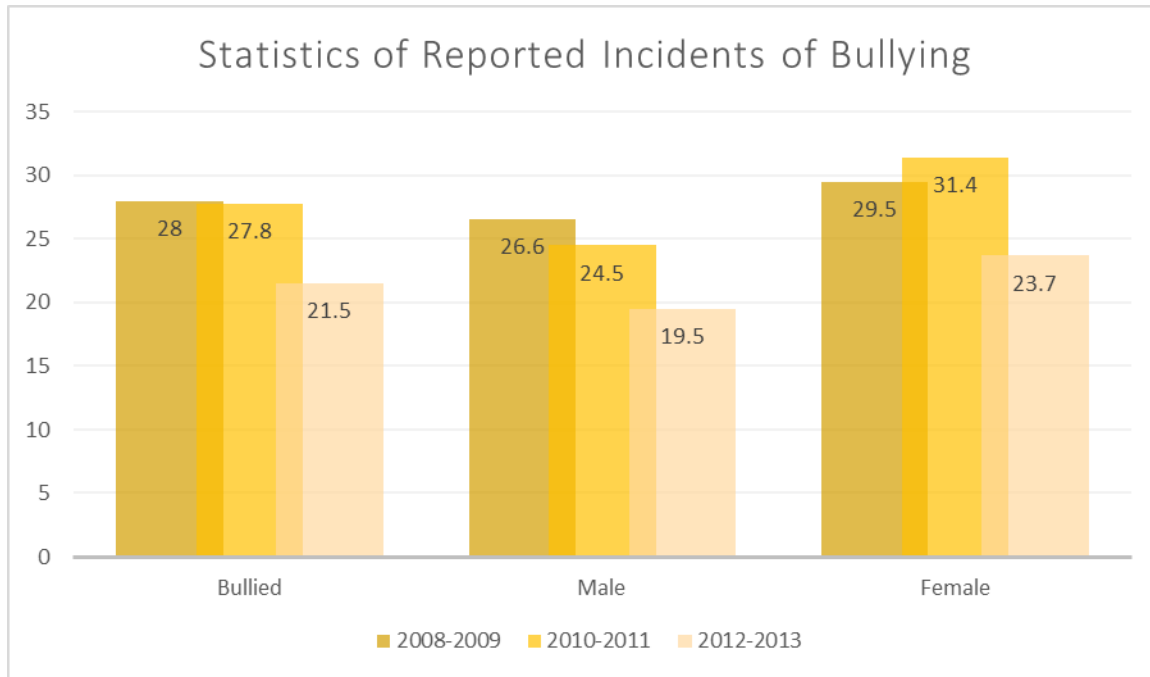


Figure 1: Reported Incidents of Bullying Between 2008-2013

(Source: DeVoe & Murphy, 2011; Lessne & Harmalkar, 2013; Lessne & Cidade, 2015)

Figure 2 illustrates the rate of bullying among different races which include White, Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and others. Although this data does not specify how these individuals justified their ethnic identity, findings show that all races have some level of victims. Excluding those that identify as Asian, all other races range from 19.2% to 25.2%. These results indicate that all races are vulnerable to being bullied.

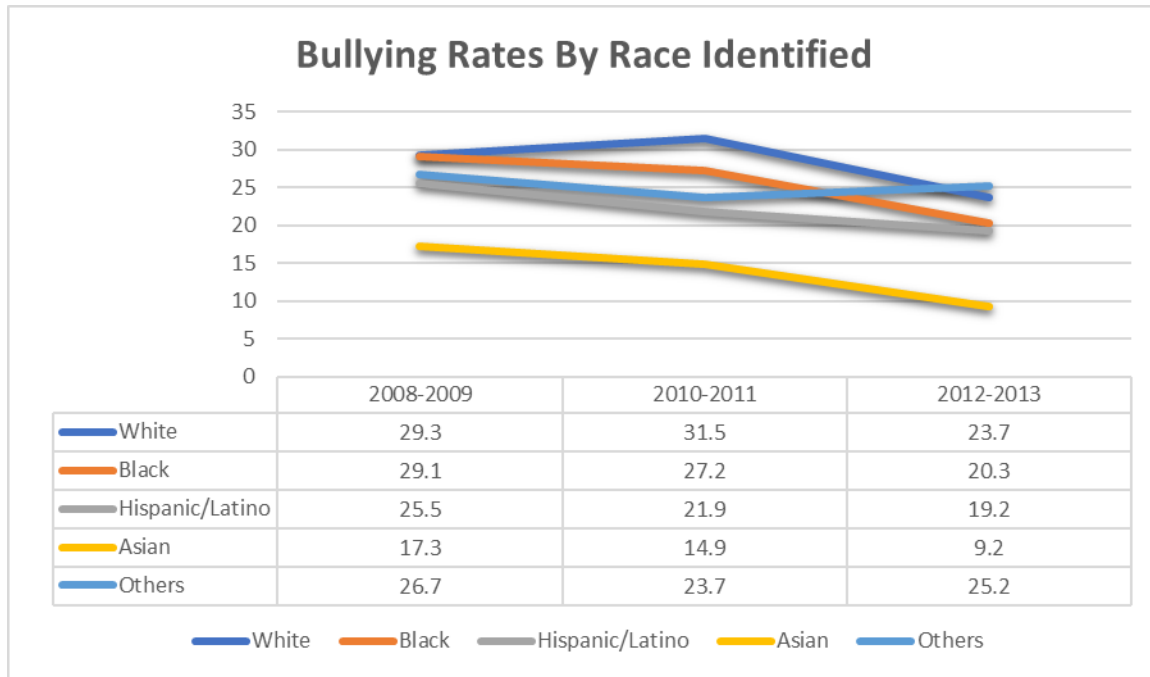


Figure 2: Bullying by Race Comparison Between 2008-2013

(Source: DeVoe & Murphy, 2011; Lessne & Harmalkar, 2013; Lessne & Cidade, 2015)

Understanding individual cases of bullying athletes is pertinent to knowing that there are different types of bullying. Bullying can include, but not limited to, such actions as hitting, threatening, social exclusion, theft, and use of electronic devices to induce actions of bullying. Despite these differences, the relationship among all forms of bullying remains unclear. All the main points of bullying (physical abuse, emotional abuse, social abuse, and property damage) are represented in Figure 3 which indicates the need for all areas to be address in any program. It is understood that the act of cyberbullying is not specifically addressed but the intention is that forms of cyberbullying can be covered by multiple categories in the table.

The public sector of sport is considerably different in structure than the private sector. Both the private and public sectors are classified as amateur sports, but public is usually linked

directly to the public education system. The public sector of sports, for purposes of this dissertation, will be any sport that is directly undertaken as a representation of a public school institution. The private sector of sports, for purposes of this dissertation, will include any sporting venue that is not directly linked to the public education system.

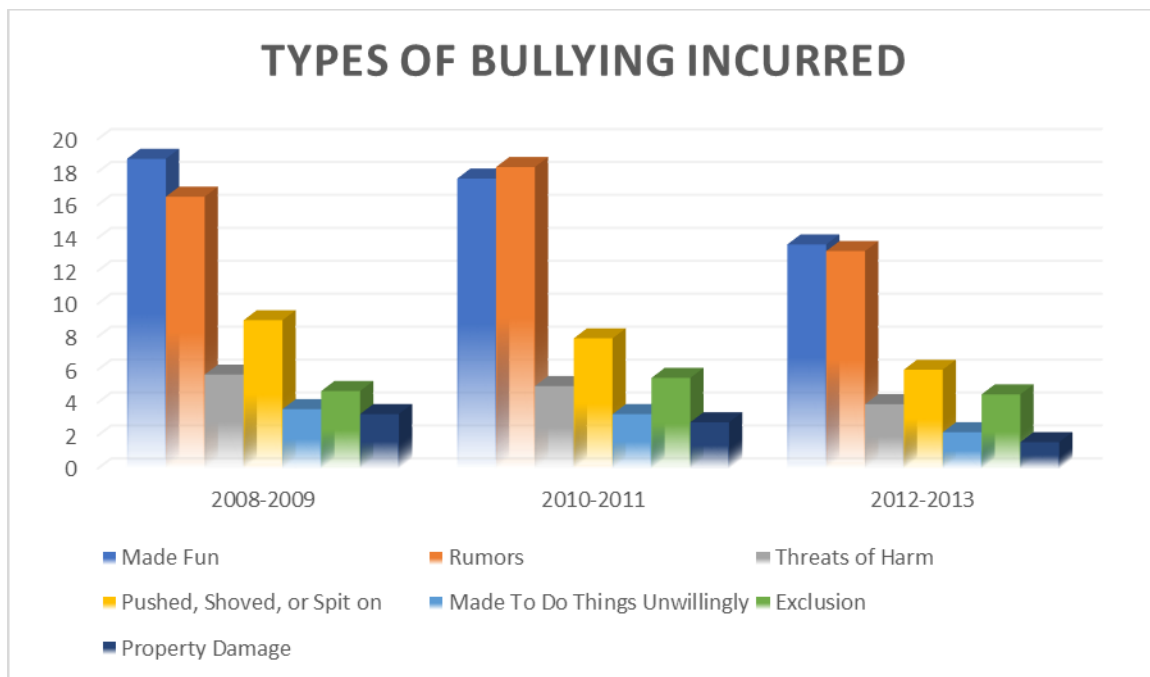


Figure 3: Comparison of Types of Bullying Incidents Between 2008-2013

(Source: DeVoe & Murphy, 2011; Lessne & Harmalkar, 2013; Lessne & Cidade, 2015)

The need for the separation of public and private sports sectors for purposes of a prevention program can be validated by a comparison of public and private schools. Figure 4 indicates that there has been a decline in reported cases of bullying in the public sector over these three school years. Figure 4 also includes a comparison of private institutions to support the argument that there is the need for blanket coverage of all private sectors. In 2012-2013, the

public and private sector of education had almost the identical percentage of reported bullying cases which justifies the need for any prevention initiative to place emphasis in both areas.

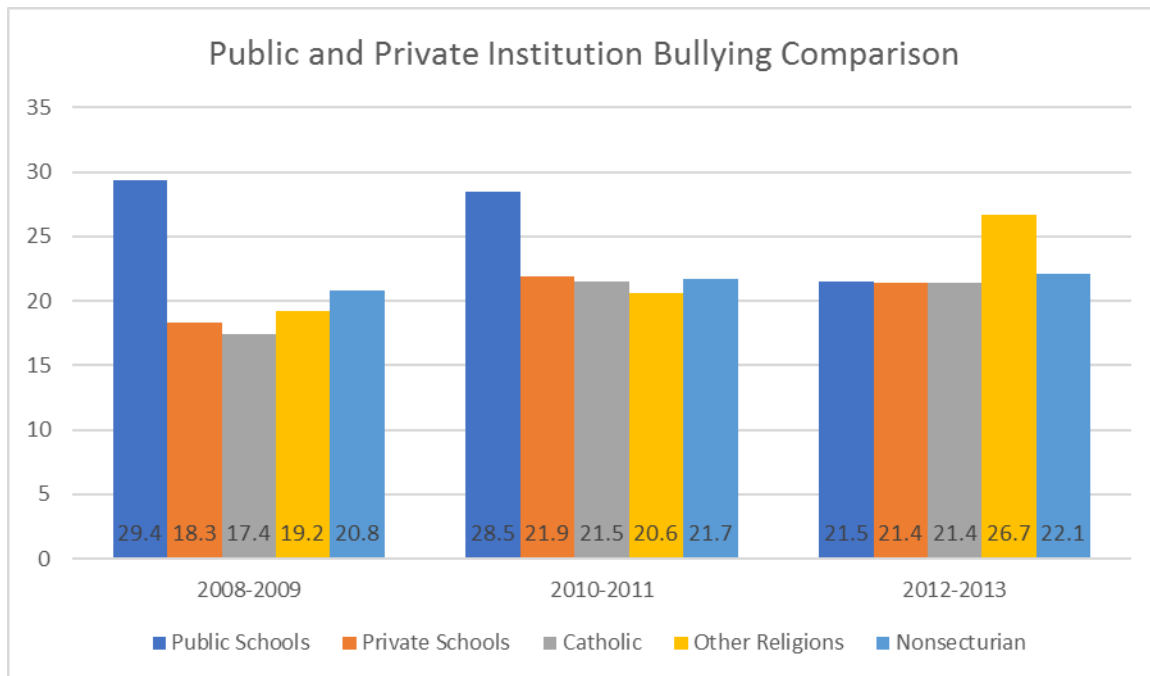


Figure 4: Institutional Structure Comparison of Bullying Between 2008-2013

(Source: DeVoe & Murphy, 2011; Lessne & Harmalkar, 2013; Lessne & Cidade, 2015)

The representations related to bullying that are displayed in Figure 3 and 4 identify that this harm can happen to anyone. It is important to state that the dangers of bullying in sports have still been looked upon as different than other areas of life and in some cases considered acceptable behavior by a coach (see Coble, 2017). Dr. Alan Goldberg (2017) makes the point that a child's body and brain does not change when they walk onto a field or a court. They are still the same child as the one in the classroom so why do we suddenly think that they can be

abused, and harm will not occur? The specifics of these areas vary greatly, but in the case of coaches bullying athletes it is always the asymmetry of power from adult to child that is relevant.

When research discusses the subject of coach bullies, it is understood that people are not born bullies and it is important to review and examine how such patterns of behavior are learned and developed (Shelton, 2013). Cohn and Canter (2003), members of the National Association of School Psychologists, describe bullying as an, “unacceptable anti-social behavior that is learned through influences in the environment.” The environment discussed by Cohn and Canter would include the environment of athletics. With the use of the term ‘anti-social behavior’, it becomes acceptable to compare bullying to other forms of learned, destructive habits such as alcoholism.

“As with alcoholism and other forms of abusive behavior, evidence strongly suggests that bullying tends to be an intergenerational problem” (Greenbaum & National School Safety Center, 1988, p. 4). Sociocultural perspectives view learning as the active construction of knowledge focused on the role that social contexts and interactions play in the construction of meaning (Lattuca & Stark, 2009). Sociocultural perspectives base their belief on the surroundings of the individual’s group and subgroups impacting the learned behavior of the individual. Bullying as a learned trait suggests that coaches who bully were also victims at one point in their lives and this means that coaches are affected in two different situations. If Shelton is right that bullying is a learned behavior, as I believe it to be, then we need to reassess the possibility that those who were bullied as youth may become the bullies in the future.

Dr. Jennifer Fraser makes the claim, “While it makes general sense to give a child-bully the benefit of the doubt, because he or she may not be aware of just how badly derogatory terms



can hurt another child, it is not acceptable to extend the same benefit of the doubt to adults” (Fraser, 2015, p. 7). Sterling and Kerr (2009) argue that to extend this type of benefit to adults in a profession of teaching children would be extremely difficult. Can coaches who are not properly educated on what is acceptable, and when it is acceptable, be unaware of why they conduct themselves in the manner that they do and how it is that they can avoid it?

### Geographic Considerations

#### *Nationally and Internationally*

The effects of coaches bullying athletes crosses all levels of athletics and it can be assumed that it occurs in every nation that has sports and athletic programs. Research indicates that potentially 1 in 10 Olympic athletes endured bullying and/or sexually assault as children or as adolescents related to sports participation (Lester, 2014). The findings by Lester indicate a global issue that has covered the age range of what can be assumed at all youth levels of competition.

The United States Olympic Committee (USOC) governs over 47 different National Governing Bodies (NGB) and 25 Paralympic NGB which include all current summer and winter Olympic/Paralympic sports (United States Olympic Committee, 2017). Those in control of these NGB are adults who have their own set of interests and internal visualization of who they are and how they act. Coaches must justify their involvement in these sports and often must relate their professional futures to successful results (David, 2005). David overlooks what I consider an important point about the justification of the coaches’ involvement. NGB are in the position to

govern over, in most cases, both youth and adult sports and all levels of competition. This places different positionalities on the NGB to be successful while supporting the athlete's development beyond sport.

Though data does not exist exclusively related to countries outside the United States and the bullying/victimization of athletes, comparisons can be used based on generalized reports of bullying across nations. In 2010, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) conducted a comparative study of boys ages 11-15 who had reported being bullied within the member countries. Results are displayed in Figure 1 and show that Austria has the highest percentage at 21% with the average being 11.44%. Sweden reported the lowest rate of bullying at 4% and the United States reported just below average at 11%.

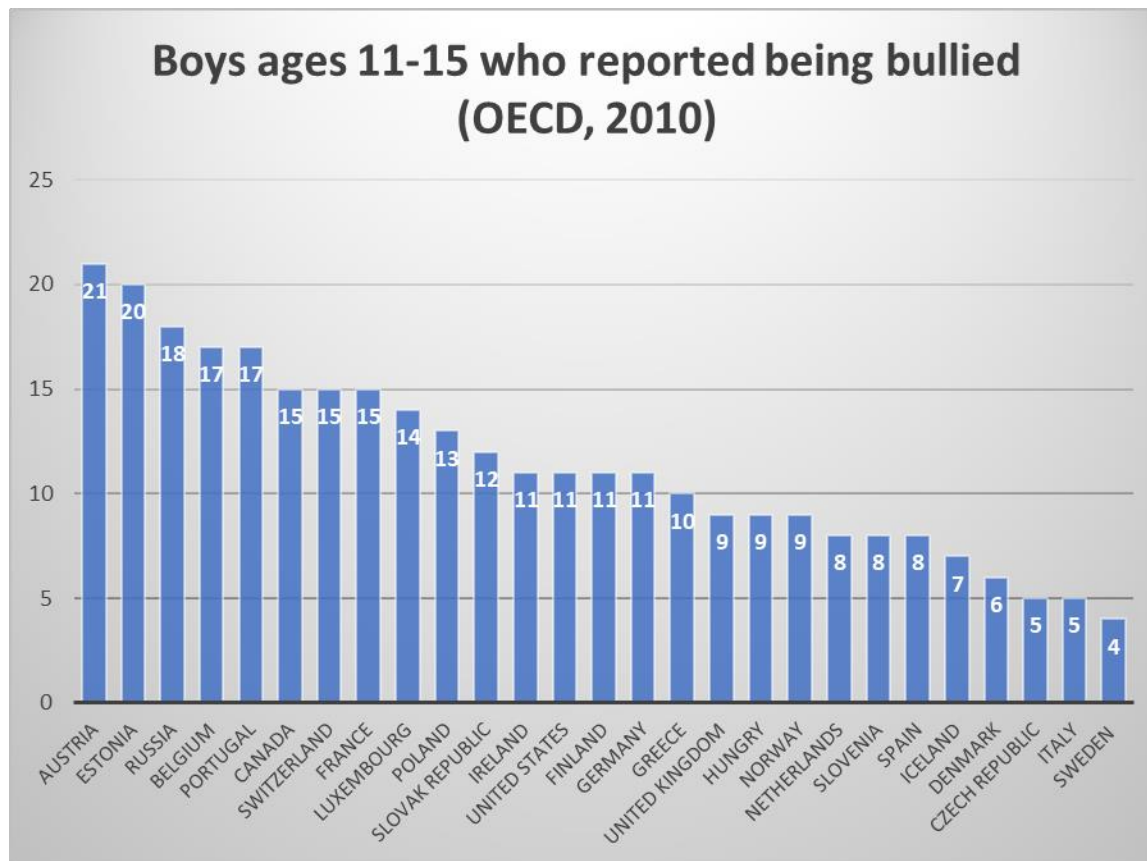


Figure 5: Boys Reporting Bullying, 2010

(Source: Miyamoto, K., Huerta, M., Kubacka, K., Ikesako, H., & Oliveira, E., 2015)

Figure 5 indicates that bullying is a global epidemic that effects all nations to some extent. Research indicates that this global issue is also found in sports across nations. Kerr et al. (2016) found that bullying in intercollegiate sports in Canada had very little difference to other countries. When interviewing 8 athletic captains of college athletic programs in Canada, all of them had been involved in or observed bullying behaviors on their specific clubs.

### Locally

In the United States, 45 million youth between the ages of 6 and 18 years old participate in organized sports each year (DiFiori, et al., 2014). Of these participants, research shows that 1 in 3 will be the victim of a bullying act by either other participants or their coaches (Lereya, Copeland, Costello, & Wolke, 2015). Coaches have a supremacy over athletes based on their age, gender (male coach/female athlete), knowledge, access to resources, authority to make choices, authority to reward and discipline, as well as the history of their past successes (Tomlinson & Yorganci, 1997). Both the time commitment to these coaches and the influence they have can place great pressure on the athlete to tolerate actions that normally would be unacceptable.

Athletes being bullied is not limited to adolescence; adult athletes can also be victims of harm. Though research data related directly to adult athletes being victims of bullying is limited, the comparison to the workplace is valid. Judith Fisher-Blando (2008) reports that 75% of all workers reported in her study were either bullied directly or had witnessed the act of bullying towards a coworker throughout their career with 47% having been victims themselves.

The athletes are not the only people effected by the act of coaches bullying. The coaches themselves can be harmed by their own actions with potential lawsuits, loss of position/job/income, and short and long-term suspensions from coaching. Approximately 800,000 adults serve as coaches to youth under the age of 18 years in the school systems of the United States (Gilbert & Trudel, 2013). With these coaching positions almost always linked to a

job position within the school system, there is the potential for these acts of bullying by coaches to affect their careers in education as well.

A longitude research study conducted at Duke University, which compared psychological disorders among the victims, the bullies, and those that were both bully and victim found that those who were the bully/victim had the highest rate of suicidal thoughts among all categories at 24.8% compared to 5.7% who were neither bully or victim (Copeland et al., 2013). Findings also found these individuals had the highest rates of depressive disorders, generalized anxiety, and panic disorders compared to others. “Until the cycle can be broken, and the behavior and damage stopped, regardless weather one is the bully or the victim, it will continue to be rampant in our society” (Fraser, 2015).

#### Social Stratifications Effects on Bullying

A review of studies conducted by Collier, van Beusekom, Bos, and Sandfort (2013) acknowledged a strong relationship of sexuality and gender being related to bullying. Research has shown that both males and females can be victims of or instigators of bullying acts, though the rate of incidents and the extent of time the bullying continues varies. Iossi Silva et al. (2013) found that in youth between the ages of 8 and 14, who were victims of bullying one to two times, 24.5% of the boys questioned were victims while 21.1% of girls where victims. The gender separation becomes greatly significant when the victimization continues 5 or more times, which 20.1% of boys reported abuse, while girls at only 8.2%.

A survey conducted by Women in Football found that 25% of females working in the sport have been a victim of bullying in the workplace while 41.43% have witnessed bullying of a

female in the workplace (Bridgewater, 2015). The Women in Football survey also found that 61.25% of the females who replied had witnessed some form of sexism while 46.22% had been victims of sexism. These results indicate that bullying is not the only form of victimization that females experience, and that bullying and other forms of victimization could be linked.

The social stratifications of bullying are not limited to gender. Research indicates that there is a definitive gap in instances of bullying. In 2014, the Workplace Bullying Institute (WBI) found that Hispanics are affected by bullying at a higher rate (56.9%) than other races but Asian Americans are directly bullied (33.3%) more than any other race (Namie, Christensen, & Phillips, 2014). Figure 2 identifies the factors to which bullying was attributed based on this survey.

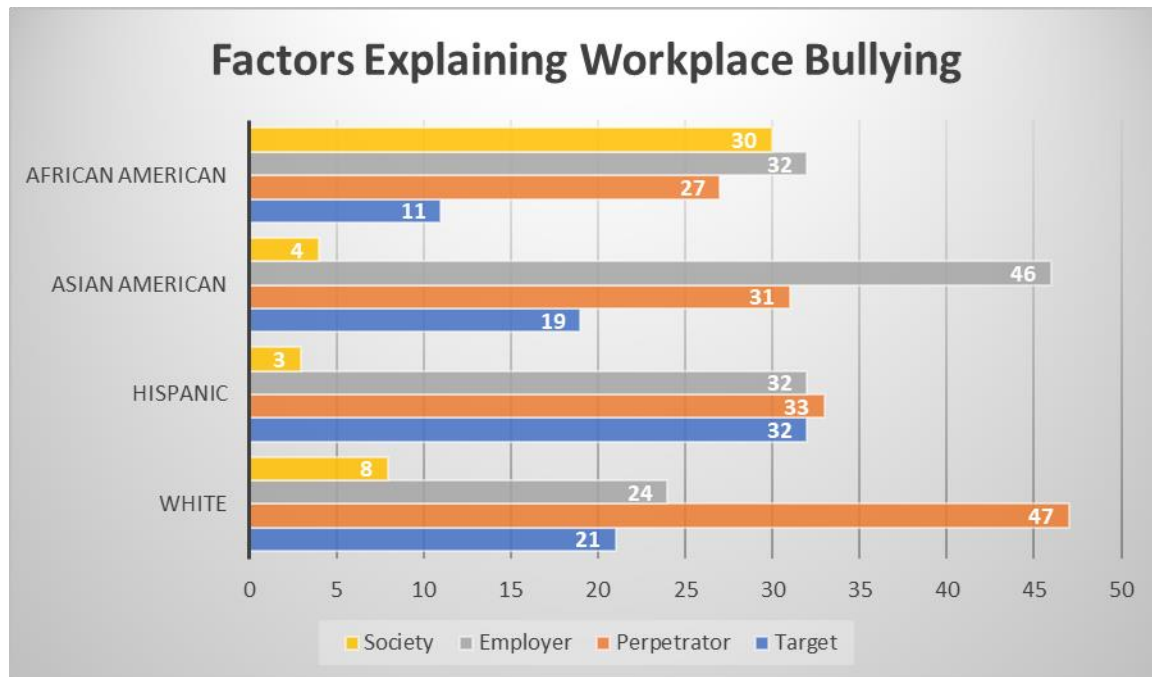


Figure 6: Factors Explaining Workplace Bullying

(Source: U.S. Workplace Bullying Institute, 2014)

In 2017, Namie went on to state that based on the research conducted by the WBI, 20% of all bullying incidents have an underlying discriminatory component involved and that the race factor of bullying had changed very little since 2007 (Namie, 2017). The data in Figure 6 identifies this to be true with 47% of bullying incidents involving a person identifying as white were the perpetrators. A large gap was found in the bullying incident being societally involved with 30% of African Americans reporting the incidents being society related. A vast number of bullying incidents involving Asian Americans were those of the Asian American being the employer.

Because of the data that is presented in this section, it can be suggested that these would be firm indicators of gender and race being factors in all bullying incidents, not just those in sport or work environments.

### Relationship to Other Problems in Coaching

#### Properly Identifying Bullying

The lack of properly defining what bullying is becomes a major issue when attempting to identify these actions. The lack of a definition that is completely encompassing makes it impossible to educate or regulate coaches and seems to generate stigmas related to bullying. It is impossible to quantify the actual number of victims with data collection that is based on incomplete definitions (Schinnerer, 2009). Likewise, it is impossible to compare different research studies that use definitions that are unclear and difficult to evaluate (Evans & Smokowski, 2016). However, my recent study (Bachand, 2017, p.15) has addressed the issue of defining bullying and for the purposes of this Dissertation in Practice, bullying will be defined as follows:

*“Bullying is the act of causing harm on any individual(s) by another individual or group of individuals having some indication of an asymmetry of power. The victim(s) nor the individuals involved in the act of harm are not gender specific and can identify in any manner based on their beliefs and can be of any age. The victimization of the individual(s) is conducted in a continuous manner over a nonspecific period. Bullying takes the form of physical abuse (any action that causes physical harm such as hitting, kicking, biting, overworking to the point of physical damage, etc..), emotional abuse (any*



*action that cause emotional distress such as name calling, verbal harassment, intimidation, etc..), social abuse (any action that defames character or creates isolation or exclusion from a group or social atmosphere), the theft or damage of an individual's property that is being victimized, or the use of a form of electronic device to produce the results of abuse to the victim.”*

Without a clear and widespread acceptance and application of such a definition, the statistics provided by many athletic organizations, as well as research studies across fields, might be invalid or statistically false due to lack of clarity.

The US Department of Health & Human Services defines bullying as, “Unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time” (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2015). This definition suggests that only school age children can be victims or perpetrators of bullying which creates an issue for those coaches that participate at the college age or older levels. College level athletics are commonly categorized into four different classifications:

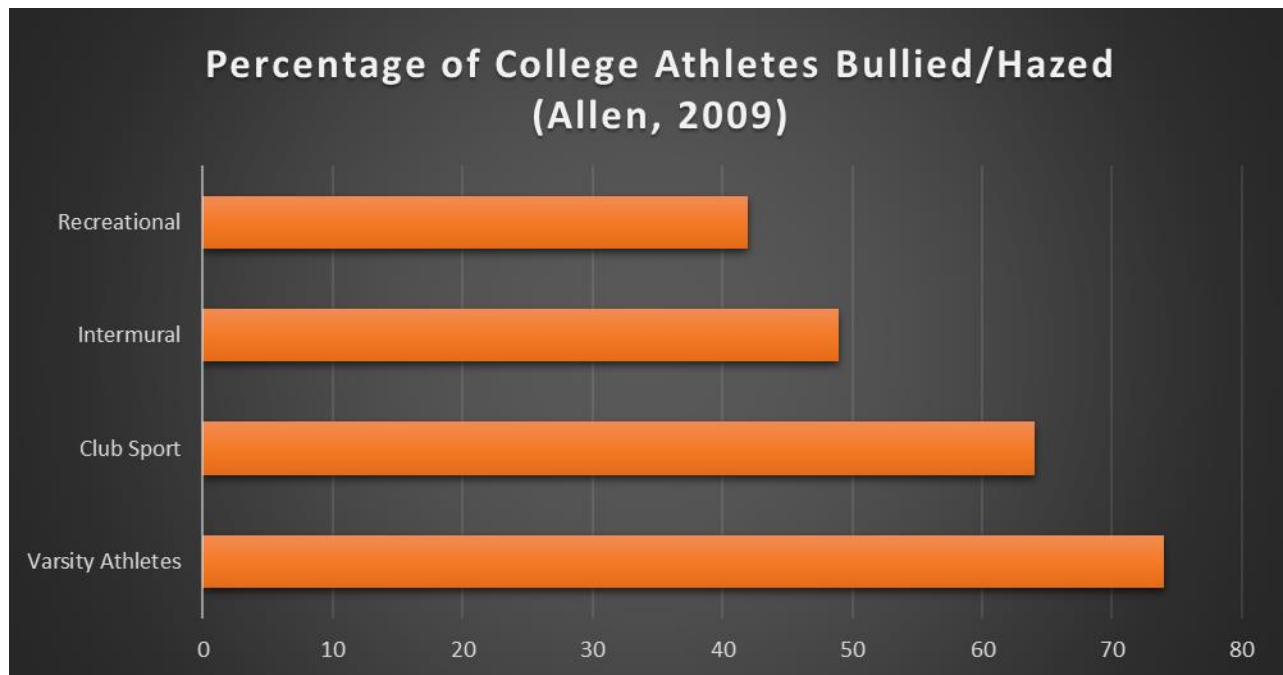
*Varsity Sports:* Those that are funded by the athletic department of a university and those that offer scholarships based on athletic performance.

*Club Sports:* Those that are, in most cases, funded by either a university fitness program, or the university student government. These clubs traditionally compete against other schools/universities in the same formats as Varsity Sports. These athletic competitions do not offer any form of scholarships to those that participate.

*Intramural Sports:* Those that are organized within a university program but are not traditionally funded. These competitions are organized within the school/university environment and are normally closed, except to those individuals who attend that specific institution.

*Recreational Sports:* Those that are not organized by traditional standards and are not intended to be structured in formatting. Forms of recreational sports are based on everyone playing and intended to be a less competitive environment. Recreational sports are traditionally self-funded and in no manner affiliated with the university's athletic programs.

Allen (2009) shows that 74% of varsity athletes have been the victim of at least one act of bullying/hazing during their time as college athletes. This number is not limited to varsity athlete at the college age, 64% of club sport, 49% of intramural, and 42% of recreational sports athletes also make the same claim (Allan, 2009). This data supports not only the incomplete definition by the United States Government but the same issue for all athletic organizations.



*Figure 7: Percentage of College Athletes Bullied/Hazed*

The lack of clarity in defining bullying leaves the athletes themselves vulnerable in the reporting system itself, which is meant to keep track of those victimized by athletic organizations for which they participate. The reporting process will be hindered based on the athletes' perception of bullying compared to the organization's definition. One research study identified 32 seminal definitions of bullying used in research studies across different fields and found that none encompassed all 10 data points identified to create a complete definition (Bachand, 2017). With this information now available related to definitions used in research, how much has bullying truly decreased?

### Learned Traits of Victimization and Stockholm Syndrome

Athletes that become coaches potentially coach in the manner that they were coached. This learned trait is an indirect effect of coaches' bullying because if the athlete either witnesses, participates, or is a victim of this bullying and no reporting or form of accountability or punishment is introduced, it is then considered acceptable behavior. Hadikin and O'Driscoll (2000) state that it takes approximately 30 years for a culture to change largely due to generational overlap. This suggests when the athlete becomes a coach, their culture of influence will last for another whole generation.

Allen (2009) identifies that almost 75% of varsity athletes in college are either bullied or hazed during their time in university athletics and identifies that bullying/hazing does not only happen in varsity sports at a university level, but also club, intramural, and recreational as well. This data provides a representation of the number of potential college athletes that are, or have learned, the victimization trait in college sports and thus have the potential to pass it on to future athletes as some of these individuals become coaches.

The coach-athlete relationship is potentially one of the most influential relationships in the athletes' lives (Gervin & Dunn, 2004). Joan Ryan makes the comparison to this influence in the book *Sex, Lies, and Volleyball* (O'Rielly, 2012) stating that coaches of elite sports can influence the athlete more than their parents or teachers at school. Athletes can develop a feeling of captivity in this relationship and potentially a form of Stockholm Syndrome.

Stockholm Syndrome is considered a complex reaction to a frightening situation where the hostage bonds with, identifies with, or sympathizes with his or her captor (Merriam-Webster

Dictionary, n.d.). The term is used to describe a condition that progresses between an aggressor and the victims in circumstances such as hostage negotiations, kidnapping, and abuse (Auerback, Kiesler, Strentz, Schmidt, & Serio, 1994). In the case of the coach-athlete relationship, the athlete (hostage) will begin to sympathize with the coach (captor) and lead to the athlete potentially coaching in the manner of coach, which continues the development of future coach bullies.

Relating Stockholm Syndrome to the coach-coach relationship is also a consequence of the coach bully. Assistants to these coaches will become unintended victims of the abuse that the coaches are initiating. The assistants are hostages to the position because in many cases coaching is a profession of learning under those coaches who have power over the assistants that may well impact and influence the progress of their careers. The assistant then has become a victim (through Terroristic Bullying) and begins to sympathize with the coach and suffer from a form of Stockholm Syndrome. This leads to the continuation of the bullying trait in future coaches and the continued victimization/bullying of athletes. Understanding future issues related to those who bully is very important for clarifying the long-term effect of bullying and its effect on those that learn the trait.

### *Terroristic Bullying*

Thornburg et al. (2012) suggests that the bystanders' perception of the situation, social context, and their own agency are key motivations to intervening. Being a witness to the act of bullying can create a feeling of helplessness or the feeling of potentially being the next target. These feelings and issues have been discussed by Dr. Robert Harrington as "Terroristic

Bullying” (Harrington, 2013). Terroristic bullying will be defined as the harm that is caused not only to the victim, but those that are in contact with the action. The Oxford Dictionary defines the word terrorist as, “A person who uses unlawful violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims” (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.). These civilians would include other athletes, parents, or coaches who are harmed as a byproduct of the action.

### *Self-Perception of Coaches*

Self-perception of coaches could be a damaging factor to athletes when discussing coach bullies. Coaches with a skewed perception of self will not be able to comprehend what they might be doing/saying as wrong in their actions but can comprehend the action being wrong when other coaches introduce said action. Research findings indicate that coaches’ perception of what is acceptable in a sexual manner with athletes differed from what *they* perceived for themselves (Bringe, Brackenridge, & Johnston, 2002). The self-perception of coaches should be questioned in relation to the act of bullying when discussing these organizations, because even if these coaches report others doing harm, the potential for them inflicting such harm still exists.

### *Perception of Outsiders*

The outsider in cases of bullying can have a different perception of the happenings that can cultivate an environment of harm. The outsider in this case will be defined as any individual not directly labeled a coach, affiliated with an athletic team as a coach or governing member, affiliated with an athletic program as a coach or governing member, or any governing body that governs a sport outside of the athletes themselves.

In 2013, video was released of Mike Rice (former head basketball coach at Rutgers University) kicking members of the team, throwing basketballs at players from point blank range, and using verbally abusive language including misogynistic and homophobic slurs. When ESPN released video of these incidents, Sean Hannity (an American radio and television host, author) praised the coach for his “intensity” and “drive”, stating, “I like that he’s pushing those kids and he runs a tight ship. Maybe we need a little more discipline in society and maybe we don’t have to be a bunch of wimps for the rest of our lives” (Charlton, 2013, n.p.).

Other perception of incidents from outsiders can be shown through other such examples. In February 2013, Mike Montgomery (former University of California, Berkeley head basketball coach) became a major focal point of discussion when he was seen shoving Allen Crabbe, one of his players. NBC Sports columnist Rob Dauster stated that Montgomery was not trying to “embarrass or assault” but was actually “trying to find a way to motivate a member of his team. And judging by the reaction of Crabbe’s teammates, he needed some motivating” (Charlton, 2013, n.p.). These actions were later said to be justified by the result of the game, which was a win, reinforcing the false logic that bullying ensures athletic success. There is no research to support this finding.

The term outsider also included those athletes who are indirectly and directly affected by these situations. During an interview conducted with Sheldon Kennedy, a former team mate of an abused ice hockey player, stated that, “If you don’t want to believe it, you won’t see it” (Robinson, 1998, p. 176). Denial as perception of the outsider is part of the problem when trying to stop bullying and victimization because others, who are approached as witnesses, may not see what happened to the victim because their belief-system blocks it.

### Leadership's Effect

Those in a position of power can present an environment that would cultivate a victimizing atmosphere. The effect of different leadership styles of those individuals (athletic directors, head coaches, etc.) that oversee those in other positions of power (coaches, assistant coaches, etc.), could create a culture of victimization. Though there is no research specific to the area of athletic coaches on this subject, research in the field of bullying in the workplace has been published.

In 2017, the Workplace Bullying Institute conducted survey research to understand if the effect of a 2-year period of presidential and congressional elections with an assault of bullying messages influenced their workplace. Of the 1080 individuals that were surveyed, 46% stated that bullying in the workplace had worsened (Namie, 2017). These results (known as the 'Trump' effect) indicate that leadership positions can influence those in contact (both directly and/or indirectly) with those witnessing (both directly and/or indirectly) the bullying message.

This study then divided those of like nature (political party) to indicate if a specific group was affected more than another. If we assume that the position of power in this study would be classified as republican, 34% of those like in nature stated that their workplace environment improved while only 6% of democrats and 16% of independents stated that their environment improved. Democrats represented the largest group of those stating their workplace environment suffered, with 59% stating bullying in the workplace had worsened after the 2016 presidential election (Namie, 2017).



The results of Namie (2017) would indicate that the theory of socialization (Socialization theory is the suggestion that members of a group would possess the same behaviors, values, and attitudes that are normative for that group (Sage, 1973)) is present in the workplace. If the argument is presented that those who have been under the same socialization theory of cultural growth, these research results would support the theory that athletic directors and head coaches can influence and cultivate the environment of bullying in their organizations.

#### Relationship to National Governing Bodies

Per the National Alliance for Youth Sports (2016), 70 percent of kids in the United States no longer participate in organized sports by age 13. The leading reason provided by those surveyed for these youths no longer participating is, “it’s just not fun anymore” (National Alliance for Youth Sports, 2016). This participation issue can be the byproduct of a coach’s lack of education in the areas of athlete satisfaction and athlete harm. This harm would include such issues as bullying, abuse, assault, etc.

Most athletic organizations require some form of certification process for coaches. The issue that affects coaches regarding this certification is that there is no standard for certification among these athletic organizations. The United States Olympic Committee (USOC) has developed a program called “Safe Sport” which gives basic information, related to the ethics of coaching, to those that complete or are required to complete the coaching certification. This certification program discusses issues such as, “the nature of misconduct in sport: how to recognize it, how to prevent it and how to take action” (United States Olympic Committee,

2017). The organizations that employ or certify these coaches to participate, are also responsible for the information provided to these coaches. Despite the importance of properly educating coaches, few have evaluated existing programs or programs like these for effectiveness of reaching their designated goal. Though I concede that each athletic organization should have a designated certification process, I still insist that without a single governing body taking the lead in the overview process, it will remain partially unsuccessful, and allow the continued victimization of athletes.

### *Race and Gender in Coaching*

Issues such as gender and race diversification in the coaching field should also be considered when discussing potential problems related to the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and bullying. Though current research has not been conducted in this area, there are significant gaps in gender and race related to sports at the college/university level.

Data collected by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) each athletic season informs the organization of all head coaches, from every sport, and at all levels of this type of information. For the purposes of this section, the areas of sport that will be compared will be that of the 5 highest revenue sports in college athletics (Football, Basketball, Baseball, Ice Hockey, and Lacrosse) (University of New Jersey Rutgers Scarlet Knight Community, 2011). In these comparisons, it is understood that no NCAA program offers Football and Baseball for female athletes.

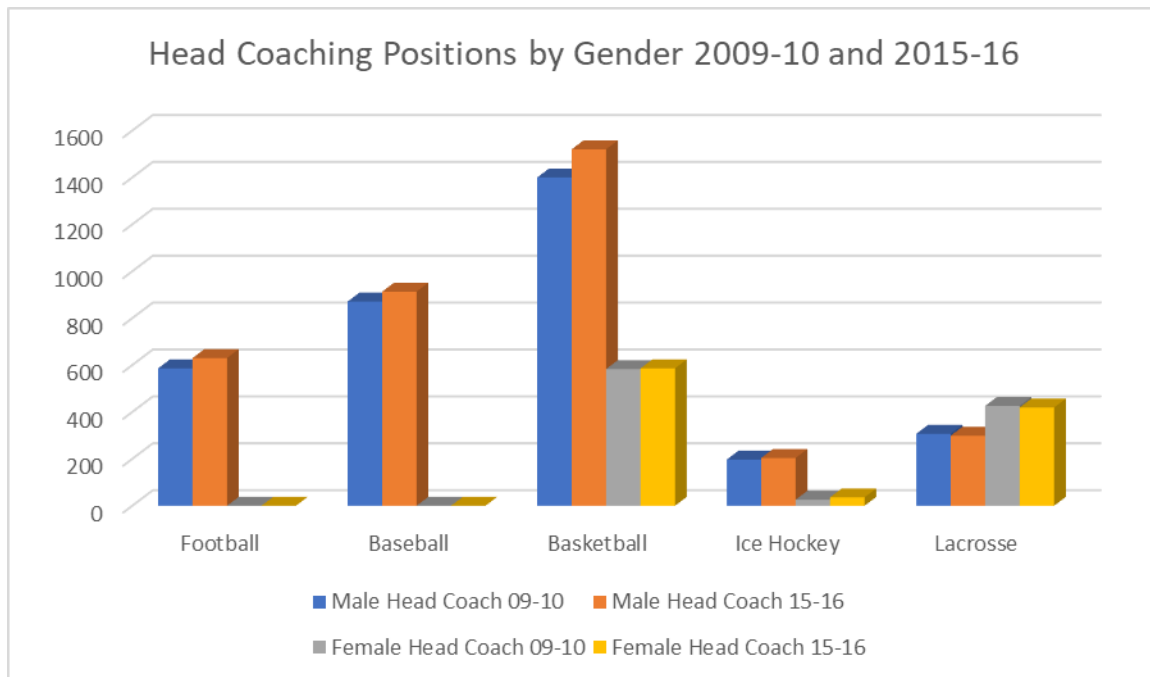


Figure 8: Head Coaching Position by Gender 2009-2010 and 2015-2016

(Source: National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2015)

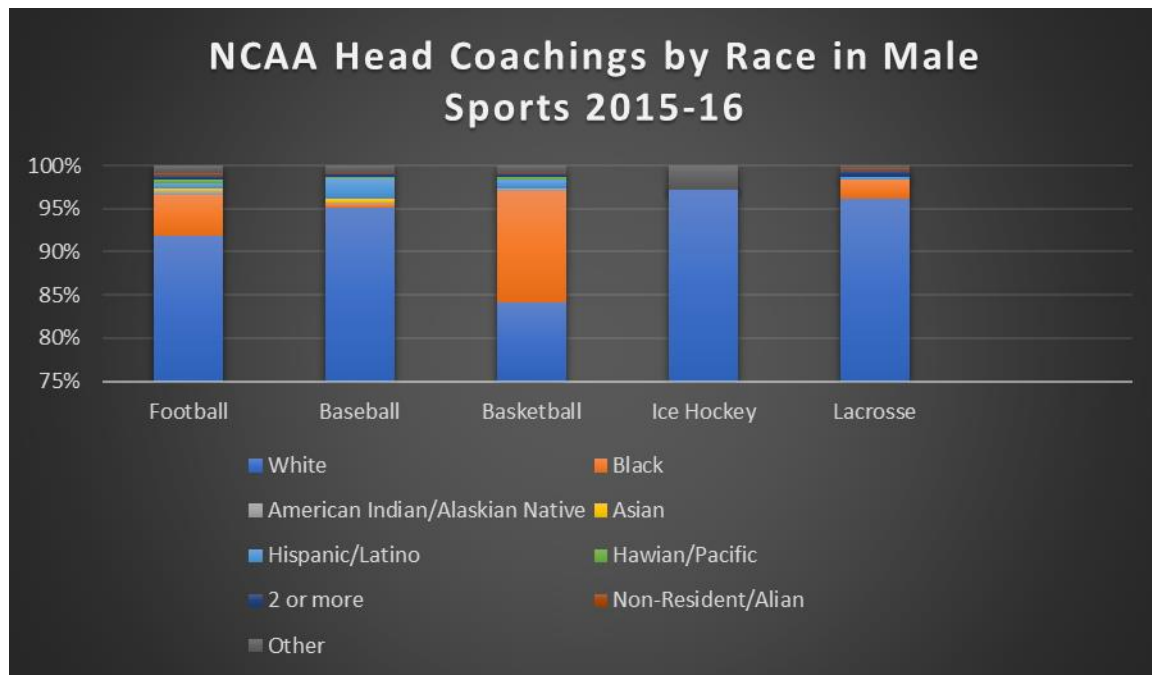


Figure 9: NCAA Head Coaching by Race in Male Sports 2015-2016

(Source: National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2015)

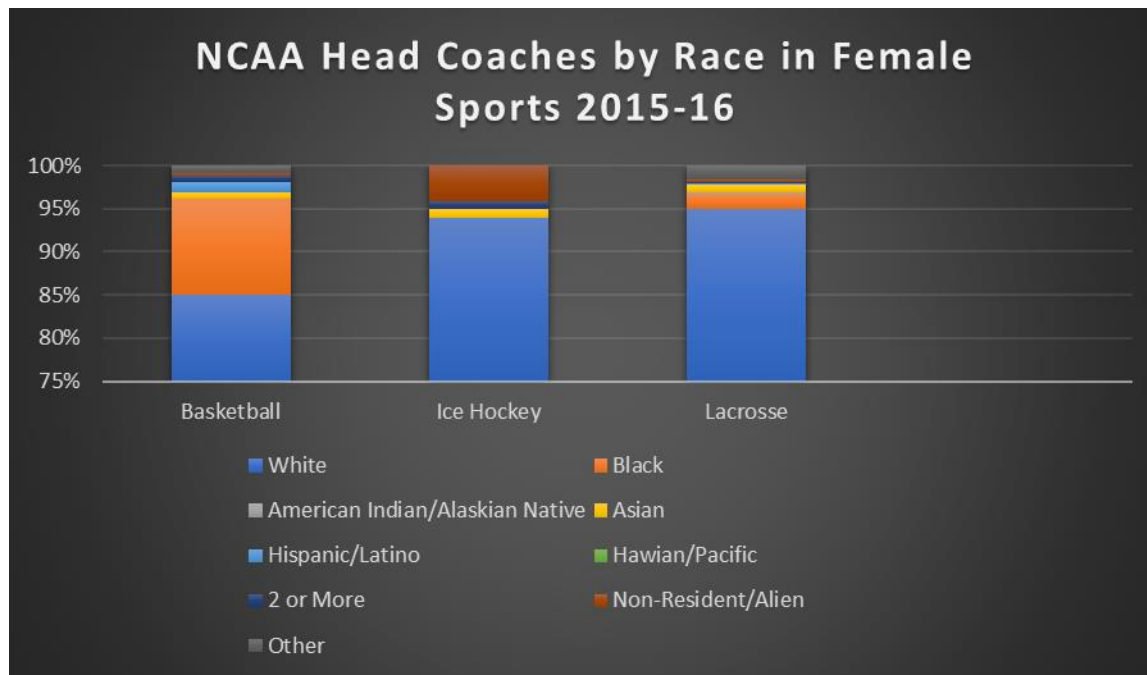


Figure 10: NCAA Head Coaches by Race in Female Sports 2015-2016

(Source: National Collegiate Athletic Association, 2015)

Figures 8, 9, and 10 demonstrate that a more than average rate of head coaches in the NCAA are white males. The overwhelming number raises the question: is a specific race or gender more likely to victimize athletes? And if so, do other genders, in this case females, and other races, in this case non-white, feel compelled to also bully athletes at even a higher rate to break into the positions dominated by white males?

#### Relationship to the United States Olympic Committee

The United States Olympic Committee (2017) defines bullying as, “(1) An intentional, persistent and repeated pattern of committing, or willfully tolerating by another person, physical and non-physical behaviors that are intended, or have the reasonable potential, to cause fear, humiliation or physical harm in an attempt to socially exclude, diminish or isolate the targeted athlete(s), as a condition of membership (2) Any act or conduct described as bullying under

federal or state law”. It is of interest to compare the definition used by the USOC and that which was discussed earlier by Bachand (2017) to see that there are many key points ignored such as asymmetry of power, theft or damage of property, or any indication of how cyberbullying would be determined. However, it is not clear whether the use of this definition can be modified to address these missing points, clarity would eliminate this need for modification.

Included in the USOC’s definition is description of exemptions which are defined as, “Bullying does not include group or team behaviors that (a) are meant to establish normative team behaviors, or (b) promote team cohesion. Bullying does not include verbal admonitions to encourage team members to train harder and to push through a difficult training regimen” (United States Olympic Committee, 2017). It can be argued that when discussing team behavior in this manner could lead one to believe that hazing would be acceptable and without clarification of what is considered acceptable admonishment, this places the USOC in potential danger of lawsuits due to lack of proper description, or it gives them the chance---due to their slippery language---to shut down lawsuits.

### Volunteer Coaches

The National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion approximates 2.5 million adults volunteer as coaches each year. If we use that number and apply Schinnerer’s (2009) tentative number of 50% of these coaches being bullies, 1.25 million volunteer coaches each year bully youth athletes. This number does not take into consideration those coaches that are paid for their services who are more likely to bully due to the pressures of having to succeed (Schinnerer, 2009).

Volunteer coaches are not the only form of coach that is verbally abusive to the athlete. In 2013, a New Jersey grade-school lacrosse coach was confronted about the bullying of a youth team. Coben (2013), while interviewing individuals close to the situation, were quoted as saying, “The coach called one player a “f\*\*\*ing retard” in front of his teammates. He told others that they shouldn’t enjoy themselves after a game because they played like, well, a compound obscenity sometimes used as a derogatory term for the female anatomy” (n.p.). Another parent stated, “While attempting to motivate his boys during one halftime, he gathered them around him and told them that they were playing as though they were undertaking a sexual act with their own grandmothers. It seems kind of small by comparison, but he also threw clipboards and kicked equipment, insulted the players’ families, cursed out coaches and referees, and humiliated and berated and singled out several players to the point of tears” (Coben, 2013, n.p.).

### Significance of The Problem

My position as a professional member of a governing body that is under the USOC umbrella has provided me the opportunity to examine the issue from the insider’s perspective. The level of bullying that I have witnessed, such as physical, verbal, and the use of imbalance of power to promote harm, is disturbing. As a coach, I must admit that I was one of these coaches that bullied my athletes, but I was also bullied as a young adult.

As a father of multiple daughters that compete in sports, it is difficult to see your children harmed or hurt. Though injury is part of sport, damage can also occur outside of physical toll of sport itself. One of my daughters was bullied by a former coach and still suffers from the effects of these actions. I not only suffer from the issues that being bullied caused me, but I also suffer

hurt in *not* seeing what was happening to my own daughter, At that time, I did ‘not want to see’ the bullying as more than ‘normal coaching.’

According to Lereya et al. (2015), bullying is an issue that causes long-term harm not only to victims, but to the bullies themselves. These issues are not limited to the time the athletes are participants in sport; rather, they can carry over into other experiences for the rest of their lives. Being bullied has comparable, and in some cases worse, long-term adverse effects on the mental health of young adults when compared to being maltreated. Neuroscientific research states that, “If we expose our young people to positive, supportive environments, they will flourish. But if the environments are toxic, they will suffer in powerful and enduring ways” (Anthes, 2010).

The United States has had a great amount of success in the Olympics with regards to final medal counts. Figure 11 and Figure 12 display the final medal counts for the United States in both summer and winter games since the modern Olympics have been established. These results continuously rank in the top of countries contesting in these games.



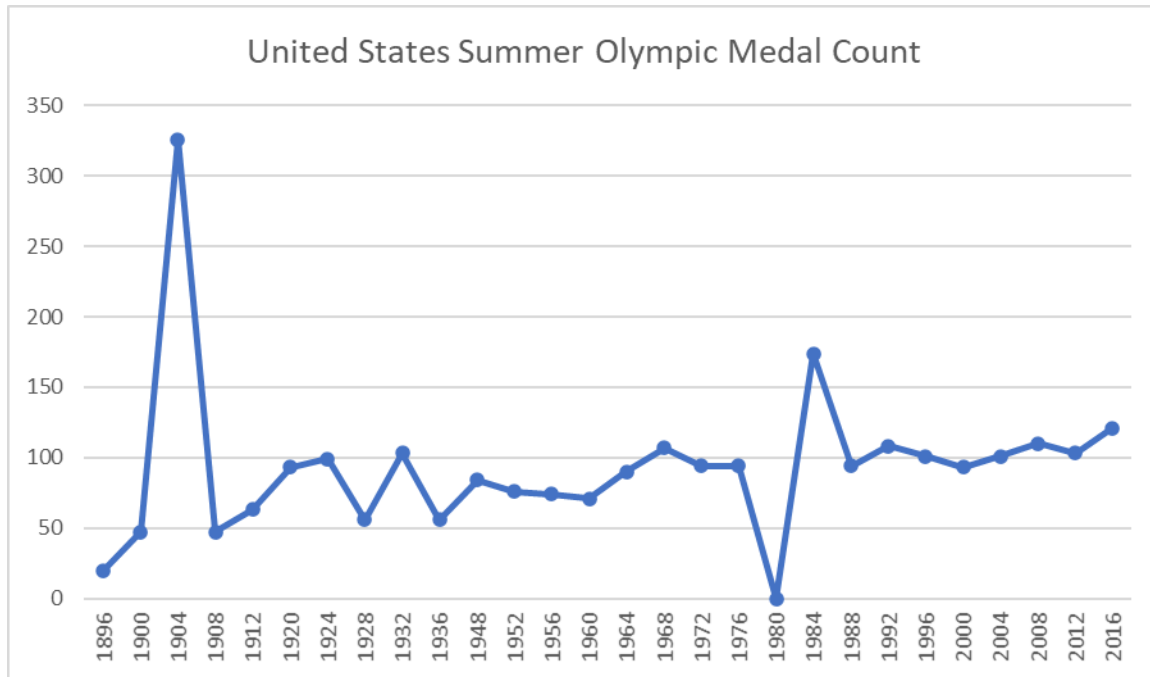


Figure 11: Final Medal Count of the United States During the Summer Olympics

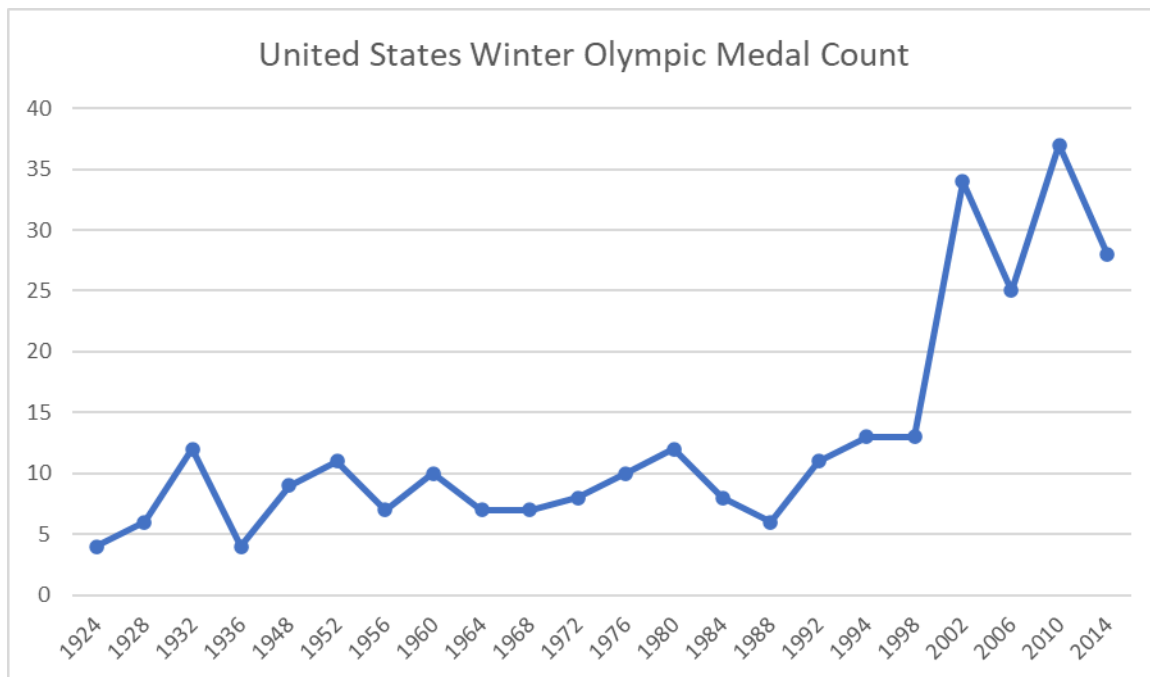


Figure 12: Final Medal Count of the United States During the Winter Olympics

When further discussion regarding these counts is looked at based on population, in the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, the United States ranked 43rd per capita. [Appendix A](#) displays all the countries' rankings that won at least one medal. Though this chart is not a proper representation of success, it can be interpreted as there being area for improvement which could cause a level of stress to succeed. Yet some may challenge the view that change is needed relating to the safety of the athletes, when put in context of the level of success the United States has achieved. After all, many believe winning is the most important thing in sports. So, why is this a problem?

## CHAPTER TWO

### Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to better understand the relationship between the coaches perceived behavior and the relationship to the specific sport they coach, gender of coach, the coaches' self-perception of who they believe themselves to be as a coach, and the coaches' perception of how other coaches' actions are acceptable compared to their own. This is essential to know because of its connection to the potential ethical beliefs, or misrepresentation of, that coaches believe they represent. The falsification of the believed self-perception will support potential ethical conundrums among coaches.

The ability for a coach to understand who they are internally allows for them to understand how others view them externally (Ehrmann & Jordan, 2011). Bertocci (1998) argues that individuals look internally as they would if they were looking in a window. Because of this, the understanding of self was looked at within this pilot study using the Principles of Coaching Guide, "Developing a Picture of Your Coaching Style" survey provided by the United States Special Olympic Committee (2003) which provides coaches with a survey to understand their perceived behaviors. These perceived behaviors were self-reported and did not have the feedback of any external sources for accuracy.

Survey data was also collected with regards to these coaches' perception of the actions of other coaches. These questions will align with the options for responses provided in the Principles of Coaching Guide, "Developing a Picture of Your Coaching Style" survey and was compared to create an understanding if these coaches have an askew perception of self. This

comparison creates a social understanding of these coaches and, in theory, provided some indication of disenchantment between perception of self, compared to others.

As addressed prior, Murdock (2013) states that the victimizing acts of an individual would have been thought out prior to the actions taking place. These actions that are premeditated generate ethical issues in relation to the coaching profession. Humans have a moralistic tendency to see oneself as an exceptionally good member of society (Paulhus & John, 1998). Being that ethics are not written rules and regulations, but that of what is right and wrong, leaves these premeditated actions to interpretation of the individual coaches' ethical views on a situation. The results of this pilot study provide indications of the 'God like' ethical beliefs of the surveyed coaches based on the disconnect of right and wrong perception.

### Defining the Problem

A coaches' self-perception can make being coached by the individual one of the best experiences of an athletes' life or one of the worst nightmares they will ever go through. It is not limited to the self-perception of the coach but their perception of what is right and wrong of how other coaches conduct themselves. This disconnect between the coaches' perception of self and their perception of others will not only harm the coach, but all those involved learning from this individual.

Research conducted by Bringer, Brackenridge, and Johnston (2002) stated a coaches' perception of what is acceptable in a sexual manor with their athletes differed from what they perceived for themselves. The purpose of this pilot study is to examine the hypothesis that

coaches perceive their individual style of coaching to be appropriate, compared to their perception of other coaches using the same perceived style.

Since the understanding of self has been of interest to psychologists, inconsistencies between ones' self-perceived attributes (self-perception) and the behavioral feedback of external sources (perception of others) has been incompatible (Higgins, 1987). These interests have extended in a vast area of directions, but little to understand how an individual's self-perception would differ from their view of another individual conducting themselves in the same manner, and never in the environment of athletic coaching.

“Perceptions of self are based on a socially shared reality, ensue from the same process as the perception of others, and are best thought of as accurate reflections of behavior and experience” (John & Robins, 1994, p. 206). If self-perception and the perception of others were viewed through the same basic processes, then the perceptions of both self and the outsider should closely correspond (John & Robins, 1994).

Self-perception, as based in socially shared realism, would stress the convergence between judgements by self and judgements by others (Funder & Colvin, 1988), which if this were reality, the perception of the individual would have a minimal difference. Coyne and Gotlib (1983) found that self-perception is reported more positively than those of an uninvolved observer which has been interpreted as a harsh bias by the observer rather than an advanced bias by the individual. When comparing the variance of self-evaluation and peer evaluation, John and Robins (1994) report a 24% variance between these methods of reporting. Though Funder (1989) makes the point that the view of self-judgement may offer more accurate reporting because it

may include pertinent information that is not available to the uninvolved observer, the variance reported by John and Robins supports the potential for consistent research variance when comparing self-perception to others perception.

Self-perceptions exhibit prevalent and enduring falsehoods, and that the basic motive of the systematic departure from self-conceptions is based in the reality of self-enhancement (Taylor & Brown, 1988), around an illusion of authenticity (Lewinsohn et al., 1980), which a normal healthy individual is prone (Paulhus and Reid, 1991). Taylor (1989, p.7) further states that, “normal human thought is marked not by accuracy but by positive self-enhancing illusions.” These self-enhancements, and other forms of motivational effects cloud the reporting of self-perception and self-knowledge as the self-reporter seeks to protect themselves from potential threats (Bem, 1972; Jones, 1990).

### Bullying and Self-Perception

Self-perceptions are inaccurate, narcissistic, and consistently more positive than is justified by the perception of others (John & Robins, 1994). Those individuals whose views of self are significantly inflated, as compared to the views of those individuals by others, are considered to have the lowest self-awareness and are rated by others to be the poorest performers (Van Velsor, Taylor, & Leslie, 1993). Dr. Burgo states that all bullies are narcissists, with an inflated level of self-importance and a marked lack of compassion for their victims’ (Lynch, 2016), which implies that if all self-perceptions are narcissistic, everyone has the potential to be a bully.

In the leader/follower relationship, if the leader has an inaccurate perception of self with respect to what the follower perceives, the relationship will likely be affected adversely (Hollander, 1992). This type of adverse behavior can include the act of bullying and create cognitive bias when accepting accountability for these actions, both welcome and unwelcome, and produce a resistance to change (Greenwald, 1985). Because the coach/athlete relationship is a prime example of a leader/follower relationship, there is a realistic possibility that a misrepresentation of self-perception can cause harm to the athletes by these coaches.

### Ego and Self-Perception

Many factors can be attributed to the reporting variance when discussing self-perception. One such factor is ego, which Greenwald (1982) stated changes the perception of self, compared to the outside observer when present. When an individual is asked to provide evaluative responses, they are unforced, unconscious, very fast, unplanned, and routinely related the behaviors of the individual being observed (Bargh, 1997) which vary from the responses of self, which are generally affected by egotistical tendencies to see oneself as exceptionally talented and socially prominent (Paulhus & John, 1998).

The ego evolves gradually from the merger of its component self-representations into a supraordinate (of or concerned with higher ranks or orders) structure that integrates other ego functions, such as memory and cognitive structures, and leads to dual characteristics (Kernberg, 1982). This is to say that an individual's ego starts its development from birth and continues to evolve based on its surroundings and environments, both good and bad.

Hauser et al. (1983) reported that higher ego development was directly associated with a more positive view of self. Further research conducted by Evans, Brody, and Noam (2001) confirmed these results and added that an individual's self-worth and behavioral conduct are not correlated to self-perception. This suggests that an individual's self-perception does not affect their behavior, but does not eliminate the potential disconnect from the individuals understanding of their behavior which could correlate with self-perception.

### Morality and Self-Perception

The human has a moralistic predisposition to see themselves as an extraordinarily good member of society (Paulhus & John, 1998). Wojciszke (2005) introduces the factor of moral traits as another potential factor in the variance between self-perception and others perception. Freud (1961) introduces the idea of the 'superego' which is the representation of moral ethics of an individual. In relation to moral ethics, self-perception is based on efficiency of obtaining goals which categorically rewards the self-reporter, while other perceptions capture whether the individual being reported on is acting in a beneficial or harmful manner to the people they surround (Wojciszke, 2005).

### Participation Criteria

The selection criteria for survey distribution was limited to the ability to obtain contact information on the individual coaches who received requests for participation. Random selection of Division I, II, and III college coaches were not identified by sport coached, gender, or college affiliate. The search engine Google Search was employed to locate email addresses for such individuals and then were contacted via cold email correspondence.



### Methodology

Qualtrics Survey Software was used for data collection and distribution of survey requests. To prevent the potential for bias based on gender or the sport coached, email information was collected based on random search using Google Chrome for athletic coaches' email addresses and entered the Qualtrics database based on survey results and availability of information. After searches were conducted, requests for survey completion were distributed to 359 athletic coaches.

The instrument used to measure coaches perceived coaching style was from the United States Special Olympics Principles of Coaching Guide. This guide is used to assist coaches in evaluating their coaching methods and styles before they begin working with these athletes. Part one, exercise three, in this guide offers a testing tool to assist in attaining a better understanding of the individuals coaching style called, "Developing a Picture of Your Coaching Style." This offers four sets (Grouped A-D) of fifteen words that describe different types of coaching mentalities for the individuals to choose from. Coaches were asked to choose all that apply to their coaching style from each group. The sum of these numbers was then placed on an XY graph and segmented into four quadrants. These quadrants were each labeled (Roman Numeral I-IV) with a different coaching style and designated the titles Expresser/Persuader, Driver, Analyzer, and Amiable.

Using each of the descriptions provided by the chart, questions were then asked to those that replied that represented their beliefs on other coaches coaching in the manors designated by the quadrants. These replies were then compared to the prior data related to the coaches' perceived coaching style.

### Relationship to Constructs

The ability for a coach to understand who they are internally allows for them to understand how others view them externally (Ehrmann & Jordan, 2011). Bertocci (1988) argues that an individual look internally as they would if they were looking in a window. Because of this, the understanding of self will be looked at within the pilot study using the Principles of Coaching Guide, “Developing a Picture of Your Coaching Style” survey provided by the United States Special Olympics Committee (2003) which provides coaches with a survey to understand their perceived behaviors. These perceived behaviors will be self-reported and will not have the feedback of any external sources for accuracy.

Survey data will also be collected with regards to these coaches’ perception of the actions of other coaches. These questions will align with the options for responses provided in the Principles of Coaching Guide, “Developing a Picture of Your Coaching Style” survey and will be compared to create an understanding if these coaches have an askew perception of self. This comparison will create a social understanding of these coaches and, in theory, should provide some indication of disenchantment between perception of self-compared to others.

Murdock (2013) states that the victimizing acts of an individual would have been thought out prior to the actions taking place. These actions that are premeditated, generate ethical issues in relation to the coaching profession. Being that ethics are not written rules and regulations, but that of what is right and wrong, leaves these premeditated actions to interpretation of the individual coaches’ ethical views on a situation. The results of the pilot study will provide indications of the potential ‘God like’ ethical belief of the surveyed coaches based on the disconnect of right and wrong perception.

## Results

Of the 359 requests for survey completion 20 responses were received (Male-13, Female-5, Choose Not to Specify-2) with sports represented as Baseball/Softball, Fencing, Lacrosse, Basketball, and Track and Field. Two of these respondents' (1 male, 1 female) data was excluded due to misunderstanding of directions related to reply. These individuals reply to the Developing a Picture of Your Coaching Style quadrants were then assessed and labeled 1st-4th (1st being the most representative). If collected data represented multiple quadrants, both are used in assessment as individual representations. Results are represented in Table 1. Based on the results, it is suggested that more coaches self-perceived coaching style would be Amiable with the least represented being Driver.

*Table 1: Representation of Self-Perceived Coaching Style by Quadrant*

<b>Quadrant/Representation</b>  <b>(%)</b>	<b>1st</b>	<b>2nd</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>4th</b>
<b>I</b>	17.4	30.4	34.8	17.4
<b>II</b>	0	8.7	26.1	65.2
<b>III</b>	17.4	34.8	30.4	17.4
<b>IV</b>	65.2	26.1	8.7	0

The question asked related to Quadrant I asked if it was acceptable for coach to believe his/her coaching methods/tactics to be questioned. Half of those who replied believe it is not acceptable for the methods of a coach to be questioned (mean=3.45, 1 being the highest rating of acceptability). Of the four replies that placed themselves in Quadrant I based on word choice,

two indicate it is acceptable to coach in this manner while the other two indicated it might or might not be acceptable for other coaches.

Coaches were asked if they found it acceptable for other coaches to induce stress to obtain performance from their athletes. Responses indicate that they perceive it is acceptable for other coaches to conduct themselves in this manner (mean=2.7). As a group, this is consistent with their self-perception being that none of the coaches surveyed perceived themselves to be in Quadrant II (Driver). Based on these findings coaches find it acceptable for themselves and others to coach in this manner which indicates no disconnect between perceptions.

Coaches were asked if they found it acceptable for other coaches to act as if they are above their athletes. The results indicate that they perceive it to be unacceptable (mean=3.9) for coaches to believe they are above their athletes. This reply is not consistent with the coaches' self-perception of acceptability with 52.2% of the coaches choosing word grouping that place this quadrant as either their 1st or 2nd choice. Two of the coaches that were placed in Quadrant III (Analyzer) stated that it is 'Definitely Not' acceptable to coach in the manner that they perceive acceptable for themselves. This indicates disconnect between these coaches' perception of acceptability for self and others.

The group of coaches that placed themselves in Quadrant IV (Amiable) as their 1st choice based on word selection, show potential for confusion of what they find acceptable. All the female responses that were inclusive, indicated Quadrant IV as their 1st choice based on word selection. Over half (57.8%) of the coaches surveyed are not sure if it is acceptable to coach with their heart over their head. Five of the coaches that indicate Quadrant IV as their 1st

choice also indicate that it is either “Probably Not” or “Definitely Not” acceptable for other coaches to coach in this manner which can support a disconnect between self-perception of acceptance compared to perception of others, though these results could also have indicted the need for self-evaluation of individual coaching methods on a border scale. This question, being related to the quadrant with the most 1st choices by the coaches could indicate a personal confusion of their coaching style.

### Conclusion

Based on the sampling that replied to the survey request, it is within reason that this hypothesis should be researched further to validate the findings of this pilot study. Initial findings show a large rate of disconnect between what coaches’ find acceptable for themselves (based on their word choices and classification of coaching style) in comparison to that which they find acceptable for other coaches. This disconnect could be explained by a coaches’ sense of self-righteousness. This self-righteousness would create a belief that they are ethically superior then others and therefore assuming that all other actions would be inferior.

Wojciszke (2005) found that the individual’s perception of ethical/unethical actions of others mattered to a much higher degree then their own ethical/unethical actions.

Silvia and Gendolla (2001) stated the assumption that self-perception and observer perception are identical is incorrect. The findings in this study support this statement and express that not only does the perception of self contrast from others but validates Silvia and Gendollas’ statement.

### Concerns and Suggestions

The amount of questions asked to the coaches that replied for data related to their perception of other coaches may have been restricted. The use of multiple questions using key terms related to each quadrant may provide a better understanding of this perception. The expansion of questioning related to the perception of what is acceptable by other coaches is needed to create a more substantial response for analysis. This does not limit the results of the individuals' perception of self, but could alter the high rate of disconnect between self-perception and perception of others.

There is the potential for gender bias skewing results based on the information collected in this pilot study. Van Velsor, Taylor, and Leslie (1993) found that females are more likely to have an overrated view of themselves in relation to effective leadership, and results showed no significant difference between men and women. This study indicated that all the female resonances perceive themselves to coach in the same manner. Future research in this area must take this into consideration and potentially conduct separate studies related to both genders as coaches, or analyze data separately when response numbers are larger.

A concern of this study is the sheer number of coaches in the United States that did not participate in this research. Though this data is supportive of a full research study, the possibility remains that the data collected is just a small pocket of individuals that happen to have a higher self-perception than others. Future research related to this matter will clarify this possibility and potentially support this pilot study's findings.

## CHAPTER THREE

*Laws set the lowest standards for conduct and it is presumed that competition will generate behavior above the minimum level (Ahmed, Chung, & Eichenseher, 2003).*

The purpose of this Dissertation in Practice was to examine if factors that cause coaches to victimize or abuse athletes are related to personality or learned traits from their own experiences as athletes. Exploratory questions include: How do coaches define ethics? What are coaches' perceptions of ethical behavior?

### Self-Perception and its Link to Ethics

People are characteristically able to identify others' predisposition to biases, but see themselves as comparatively immune to such biases (Pronin et al., 2002). The asymmetry between how humans perceive themselves compared to others is closely related to the fundamental attribute error (FAE) (Jones & Nisbett, 1972). Tomlin et al. (2017) classify FAE as the self-perception bias where individuals attribute others' behaviors to internal characteristics and temperaments but attribute their own behavior to environmental influences.

Causation is complex because humans are, by nature, self-interested and fallible which causes misconstrued decisions about ethical responsibility (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004). The area of self-perception is not easily studied in part, because the nature of the research is neither fully developed nor tested (Eva & Regehr, 2005). The predominant value in self-perception research may relate to the conceptual clarity and coherence for the individual field being reviewed (Colliver, Verhulst, & Barrows, 2005), and/or the inseparability of an individual's ethics with issues of power, knowledge, and discourse (Foucault, 1995).

Davis et al. (2006) conducted a systematic review of studies related to self-perception of physicians and found that there is weak to no association between self-rated assessments and those of external reviewers. Falchikov and Boud (1989) reported the same results while conducting a meta-analysis of quantitative self-perception studies in law, engineering, guidance counselors, behavioral science, psychology, and medicine. Even when the domains of ethics are well defined in such research studies, Eva et al. (2004) found that poor correlation between self-perception and external perception of ethics still existed.

### The Significance of the Problem

The importance of considering more than one form of review, while conducting research related to self-assessments, must not be overlooked because of the critical stance one must take in their findings (Moss, 1994). “Ethics and moral judgement involve the application of social values. Every culture has its values and norms that are developed over generations” (Ahmed, Chung, & Eichenseher, 2003, p. 90). The self-perception of these ethical judgements often associated with self-deception provide the opportunity for denying responsibility of the events that are caused by said actions (White, 1988).

Individuals low in ethical identity are prone to ethical conduct only when the impact of a situation requires them (Moberg & Caldwell, 2007), while also being much more susceptible to an individual’s negative moral qualities than their lack of competence (Moberg, 2006). Athletics is a performance-based environment for both athletes and coaches alike (Dahl, 2013), which would support Caldwell and Moberg’s statements regarding situational ethics and need for coaching competence in their chosen sport. Implementing a pilot study that would inform the validity of the ethical perception that coaches perceive themselves to have supports questioning



athletic coaches' understanding of ethics. The design of the Chapter Two pilot study was developed to support the theory that athletic coaches' ethical understanding of self is potentially related to past experiences in athletics, and if athletic coaches have a distinctly different view of themselves internally, then they would view others who participate in the same ethical abuses.

### Ethical Education

While more than half of organizations (including a variety of non-sports organizations) provide ethical training (Joseph, 2003), Tomlin et al. (2017) suggest that self-perception biases are not included in most behavioral ethics education. Further, these biases are crucial to true ethical change. Ethics education traditionally highlighted theory and analysis rooted in rules, principles, and standards for determining moral right and wrong (Ferrell, Fraedrich, & Ferrell, 2013). Rest (1986) states that rational individuals move through four steps when presented with an ethical dilemma: moral awareness (the ability to detect and appreciate the ethical aspects of a decision that one must make), moral judgement (thinking about whether something has a moral attribute), moral intention (the desire to act ethically when facing a decision and overcome the rationalization to not be ethical during that specific instance), then moral action (taking steps to transform the intent to do the right thing into reality). For an individual to move through these steps, it must be assumed that individuals can identify ethical challenges in real world situations (Tomlin et al., 2017).

Tenbrunsel et al. (2010), states that individuals fail to identify unethical behavior in which they participate. Ethics education might increase this disconnect of self-perception, and those who have participated in ethics education are more likely to believe their decisions as more ethical than their peers' when both situations are identical (Lau, 2010). Self-perception has been

identified as important in ethical education, because of its role in individuals' readiness for ethical coaching, training, and development (Morgan, 1993).

The pilot study in Chapter Two examined the potential for coaches to have a misconception of self-perception in their coaching styles and a comparison of their perception of others' coaching styles. Findings indicate that coaches have a skewed perception of self and lack the understanding of their own coaching styles. The findings also showed an inflated perception of acceptance in their wrongdoings compared to others who coach in the same manners.

The findings of the pilot study supported prior research (Morgan, 1993; Lau, 2010; Tenbrunsel et al., 2010) and indicate that the same disconnect exists in coaching education. The actions that were indicated as abusive/unethical in the pilot study would classify what Putnam (1992) describes as lesser abstract concepts of ethics. Of those who participated in the pilot study, nine individuals currently work within a university as professors. Eight of the nine indicated that their coaches during their athletic careers participated in abusive/unethical behavior (verbal, physical, and emotional abuse), only three of whom believed these actions to be abusive/unethical. Many of these individuals (six of the nine who were classified as coach educators) stated that they modeled their coaching style after these abusive/unethical coaches.

These findings suggest that coaches might suffer from a form of Narcissistic Personality Disorder, or 'God Complex' which is categorized by a magnified sense of self-importance, a deep need for appreciation, and a lack of empathy which produces an obsessive preoccupation with standing and supremacy (Shira-Teitel, 2015). Svrakic (1986) suggests that individuals who

have a narcissistic ethical misconception of self would have an inflated view of their actions (being ethically superior) compared to others (being ethically inferior).

Richards (1999) points to the fact that ethics training is short-lived, and codes of conduct have produced no discernible difference in behavior (Badaracco & Webb, 1995). Porter (1998) states that ethics have been linked to rhetoric and that modern views of ethics are more procedural, specific, and concrete, resembling more rules and regulations. Rest (1986) conclusively shows that the misrepresentation of teaching ethics centers on the misperception between teaching values versus teaching reasoning which hypothetically explains these findings.

### Topical Studies

Similar formatting of this pilot study has been used to review self-perception (Silvia & Gendolla, 2001) and reviewing leadership behavior in sports (Smoll & Smith, 1989) but these were not used as comparative (self to others) or related to ethical/unethical actions. Kerr et al. (2016) used similar formatting when examining the student-athlete in relation to bullying, but this study did not incorporate the perceived coaching style of the athletic coaches whom participated.

The United States Special Olympic Committee (2003) has used similar questions in their coaching education tool, “Principles of Coaching Guide – Developing a Picture of Your Coaching Style,” with self-reported success. However, their format did not include coaches’ self-perceptions of their ethics. Baumeister et al. (2001), found that when an individual perceives others, negative assessments are more salient than positive ones.

The idea of assessments in an individual’s perception of others are further established by

Wojciszke (1994) who states that people observe one another in two separate frames, competence (accomplished, smart, effective, creative, and strong) and moral characteristics (honest, generous, humane, and sympathetic), which is critical to moral agency. These two frames are prominent as individuals evaluate the trustworthiness of others (Reina & Reina, 1999), but Moberg (2006) states that the misperception of moral and ethical character is based on an inaccurate view of the situation. These misperceptions will lead people to judge individuals as competent even when they are immoral (McLeen & Elkind, 2003).

Greenwald (1980) states that researchers have historically qualified differences in self-rating and others' ratings to the deficits of the individuals' self-perception, which are a defense mechanism to maintain the individuals' self-esteem. To proclaim that the process of evaluating one's own ethics will produce attempts to preserve both self-esteem and a socially desirable image is reasonable (Morgan, 1993).

### Conceptual Framework

#### Self-Perception

The theory of self-perception, developed by social psychologist Daryl Bem, is defined as the way one sees themselves in contrast to others in the world (Vocaturro, 2009). The perception of identity defines how an individual confirms their value to others and to themselves (Sluss & Ashforth, 2007). The concept of self-perception is incredibly important to individuals, though they are often guilty of self-deception (Warner, 2001), which can potentially have a negative impact on the lives of others (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005). It has been stated that knowledge of the self is at the center of human behavior (Whetten & Cameron, 2007), but under times of stress,

individuals become less aware of self and fail to interpret signals from others that make managing themselves and their relationships ineffective (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005).

Self-perception is also dominated by the belief of one's competence and not their ethical beliefs (Drucker, 2005), but everyone believes themselves to be ethical and moral – even known liars and imprisoned felons (Baumeister, 1998). Subsequently, an individual's self-perception is thought to be the exact opposite of that individual's perception of others (Wojciszke, 1994) which means that an individual perceives their actions (both ethical and unethical) to be acceptable, while those same actions, when conducted by another individual, to be unacceptable. These same individuals are less invested in unethical behavior and are far less aroused when they commit an immoral act, then when their actions constitute a performance failure (Wojciszke & Dowhyluk, 2003), which expresses the vested interest in a coaches self-perceived identity to be more performance based than ethically based.

The context of self-perception was used to analyze the data to evaluate the internal understanding of self, using ethical blind spots, self-deception, and language euphemisms as constructs. An individual's self-perception links their understanding of ethical accountability by using the practice of denial regarding their identity or full understanding of ethical duties upon them (Caldwell, 2009).

### *Ethical Blind Spots*

Ethical blind spots are biases, heuristics, and psychological traps which have become the cornerstone of developing behavioral research (Tomlin et al., 2017). These blind spots exist when people are victims of common but flawed or imperfect self-perception of moral attributes

(Moberg, 2006). Humans are sometimes limited in their ability to access, comprehend, and process information (Simon, 1990). Humans also tend to believe they are in control of their thoughts, while human judgement is often a result of fast, involuntary, and nearly automatic systems which rely on heuristics (Kahneman, 2011). “These heuristics are mental shortcuts that allow people to move quickly and easily through their complex world, saving resources for instances that require concentration and deliberation. But they often sacrifice accuracy” (Tomlin et al., 2017. P. 543).

Ethical blind spots also lead individuals to be overconfident in their own perception of ethical standards and to make decisions without deep reflection (Tenbrunsel et al., 2010). Individuals perceive themselves as ethical by referring strongly to their beliefs even if their behavior presents conflicting evidence (Bazerman & Tenbrunsel, 2011). These blind spots may also hinder positive role modeling as a means for the cultivation of others ethical character (Moberg, 2000).

### *Self-Deception*

Self-deception has been described as a discrepancy between knowing how an individual is supposed to act and how they truly act (Festinger, 1962) which include such mechanisms as projection, displacement, and denial which lead to feedback avoiding behavior (Moss & Sanchez, 2004). Additionally, self-deception involves such mechanisms as escaping the truth, the lies we tell, and the secrets an individual keeps from themselves (Bok, 1989). Ritov and Baron (1990) believe that these acts of personal oversight blur the obligation of responsibility which causes self-bias and moves the blame from self to others.

Maslow (1962) states that we deny our created reality and practice self-deception instead of being aware of our actions because, “we tend to be afraid of any knowledge that would cause us to despise ourselves or to make us feel inferior, weak worthless, evil, or shameful” (p.57), which allows an individual to behave self-interestedly, while deceptively believing their ethical values were upheld (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004). The deceptive ethical values created by self-deception allows for a self-serving bias that is universal and applies to virtually everyone (Gilovich, 1991). It is apparent that the need to acknowledge the pervasiveness of self-deception and the role it plays in unethical decision making (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004), while accepting that the human mind can trick itself to justify unethical choices (Messick & Bazerman, 1996), making it more likely for an increase in unethical behavior (Ritov & Baron, 1990).

### *Language Euphemisms*

Language euphemisms are disguised stories an individual tells themselves to make unethical conduct reputable and is a harmful weapon (Bandura, 1999). Albert Speer (1970), a member of the Nazi Germany government and Hitler’s innermost circle of advisors, discusses how during the design of the munitions factories he was very knowledgeable of the handling of the prisoners, but by relabeling himself as an ‘architect’ or ‘administrator’, was able to convince himself that worrying about these individuals was not his job. Language euphemisms in themselves are not dangerous, but when they are used to avoid the complexity inherent in ethical dilemma, they can become dangerous (Bok, 1989).

### Nash's Moral Languages

Nash's (1996) Three Moral Languages were used to guide the development of how individuals internalize certain situations, environments, materials, thoughts, and beliefs. Nash states that, "the world of ethics is an endless interpretation, and rarely is there a final or definitive response to an ethical dilemma" (p.57). The terms ethics and morals are used interchangeably by many ethicist leaders (Frankena, 1973). When these ethics and morals became exclusively an analytic justification, individuals would analyze moral presuppositions and potentially still not know right from wrong (Bok, 1976). Barnes (1971) believes that everyone's reality can be classified as a 'metaphysical life-space', where ethical dilemmas are experienced for their own unique meaning (p. 65).

Ong, Yee, and Lee (2012) define ethical dilemmas as situations where individuals must choose between two or more ethically acceptable options or equally unacceptable actions, when one choice prevents the choice of the other(s). This definition is further clarified by Nash (1996) by adding that the action can be reasonably defended as the "good" choice.

Nash (1996) describes ethics as the abstract ideas that guide a human's essential assumptions associated with the nature of reality and what individuals experience as good or bad, right or wrong, important or unimportant. The belief that ethics is endlessly interpretable and there is rarely a definitive response to an ethical situation (Nash, 2002) can be described as unpredictable based on the source of the individual's' learned moral manipulation (Godfrey & Jacobs, 1978).



The Three Moral Languages, as developed through the constructs, will indicate the interviewees perception of each language. This perception will provide an understanding of how individuals internalize different ethical questions and what moral language leads them to these decisions.

### *The First Language: Background Beliefs*

Nash (2002) states that the First Moral Language centers in an individual's background beliefs, which are described as the "'metaphysical basement' (the zero-level of beliefs) to understand their unique, "inescapable" horizons of meanings, their ethical centers of reference" (p.40). Cooper and Wisbey (2003) describe this first language as an individuals' moral position derived from their cultural, religious, social and family contexts and/or the interpretation of said influences. By using the first language to identify ethical judgements, decisions, and actions, one can interpret what is profoundly important to that individual (Nash, 1996).

The first language is not used by individuals to solve concrete problems but to find an individual's beliefs center of reference (Nash, 1996). Nash uses Smart's (1983) to emphasize that an individual's worldview is formed in the foundation of that individuals background and can be classified in six dimensions (Doctrinal (fundamental principles), Mythic (stories with special sacred meanings), Ethical (prescribed rules and regulations), Ritual (ceremonial customs), Experiential (expression of egotistical feelings), and Social (groups or organizations)). They are used as potential identifying ethical factors.

### *The Second Language: Moral Character*

Nash (2002) states that the Second Moral Language has a much more colorful response to ethics than the first or third and is the language of ‘thick description’ (p.58). “In addition to living in a metaphysical life space, where we speak a more private, foundational, and philosophical language, we also live in a number of small, tangible communities, where we speak a "thick" language of feeling, memory, intuition, and imagination, a language that St. Anselm believed God speaks” (Nash, 2002, p. 59). Cooper and Wisbey (2003) clarify the Second Moral Language to be that which is guided by community standards, norms, role expectations and professional codes of ethics.

The Second Moral Language is centered in the framework for understanding individuals’ actual ethical dilemmas and offers the possibility to identify an individual’s ethical growth in a specific situation (Nash, 1996). Callahan (1991) believes much of an individual’s rational thinking process is conducted nonconscious and the process is unavailable, unnoticed, or unappreciated by our conscious phenomenological awareness. Nash (1996) recognizes the use of personal stories as essential if individuals are truly to know themselves.

### *The Third Language: Moral Principle*

“The major purpose of the moral principle framework is to justify or defend an ethical decision based on a logical appeal to appropriate rules, principles, and theories” (Nash, 1996, p. 115). Nash (1996) states that the Third Moral Language is the language of principle and “in a secular pluralist society, only a thin moral language is capable of resolving ethical dilemmas” (p. 110). Nash (1996) describes this thin moral language as procedural set within abstract, general,

and principled accounts which creates the approach of ethical problem solving to be an agreement between the professionals and clients.

The Third Moral Language makes specific distinctions between act- and rule...- (Nash, 1996). A document that would be considered part of the Third Moral Language is a code of ethics, which individuals expect to do things they are not designed for (Lebacqz, 1985). A code of ethics is not meant to be used as an exact ethical action guide (Nash, 1996) best serves as a guide to what the profession wants to portray and the character of its professionals (Lebacqz, 1985).

#### *Conceptual Framework – Self-Perception and Nash’s Moral Languages*

Interview questions were numbered (see [Appendix C](#)) and classified as to the potential of identifying information related to each construct. Table 14 identifies the theories, constructs, definitions, attributes, and their relationship to the interview questions.

Table 2: Conceptual Framework and Question Relationships

Research Question	Theory	Constructs	Definition	Attributes	Interview Questions
What are coaches' perceptions of ethical behavior?	Self-Perception	Ethical Blind Spots	Bias, psychological traps	Not identifying an unethical situation	2,3,6,7
		Self-Deception	Knowing what to do vs actual actions	Develop individual rationale for unethical behavior	2,4,5,6
		Language Euphemisms	Disguising word meaning	Self-selected language to rationalize meaning (motivating vs abusing)	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9
How do coaches define ethics?	Nash's Moral Languages	First Moral Language	Individuals background beliefs (zero-level of beliefs)	Language identifying cultural, religious, social, or family contexts	1,5,7,8
		Second Moral Language	Individuals actual ethical dilemmas and potential ethical growth	Morals guided by community standards, norms, role expectations, and professional codes of ethics	1,3,4,9
		Third Moral Language	Procedural language set within abstract, general, and principle accounts	Solution is agreed upon between professionals and client (ex. A code of ethics).	1,2,4,6,9

### The Study

The purpose of this Dissertation in Practice was to examine if factors that cause coaches to victimize or abuse athletes are related to personality or learned traits from their own experiences as athletes.

### Phenomenological Method

Husserl (1975) describes phenomenological research as the discover of knowledge “by reference to the things and facts themselves, as these are given in actual experience and intuition” (p.6). In phenomenological studies, the investigator refrains from developing theories, focuses on a specific topic in a naive manner, develops a question(s) or problem(s) to guide the study, and creates findings (based on the act of seeing just what is presented, as it is, again and again, with the prospect of confirmation) (Moustakas, 1994). The confirmation procedures belong to the researcher (Husserl, 1975) and are achieve by repeated review while the phenomenon remains the same (Moustakas, 1994).

“In contemporary human science, ‘lived experience’ remains a central methodological notion that aims to provide concrete insights into the qualitative meanings of phenomena in people’s lives” (Van Manen, 2016, p.40). An individual’s ‘lived experiences’ will form the beginning of their inquiry, reflection, and interpretation and is experienced prior to the individual taking a reflective view of the situation (Van Manen, 2016). A phenomenological researcher then interprets these ‘lived experiences’ (where the information is provided via interview) into meanings which are descriptive and interpretative where social sciences generally aim at explanation (Van Manen, 2016).

Interviewees were asked to complete a demographic survey prior to the interview. This demographic survey included information related to the interviewees age, gender, ethnicity, coaching experience, and athletic experience. Questions and results of this survey are provided in [Appendix D](#) and [Appendix E](#). Upon completion of the demographic survey, interviews were conducted and transcribed for data analysis purposes.

### Participants

Participants included coaches, former or current Olympic athletes, and coaches who were former Olympic athletes from a randomly selected list of potential participants. Requests for participation were distributed via email and in person (when asked to do so). Methods used to identify potential participants were by personal interaction and knowledge, and the information provided by the potential participant.

### Procedures

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of The University of Central Florida approval was granted for this study on April 6, 2018. The IRB file number is SBE-18-13833 (See [Appendix B](#)).

The researcher conducted thirteen interviews. Interviewees were asked to complete a demographic survey prior to the interview. This demographic survey included information related to the interviewees' age, gender, ethnicity, coaching experience, and athletic experience. Questions and results of this survey are provided in [Appendix D](#) and [Appendix E](#). Upon

completion of the demographic survey, interviews were conducted and transcribed for data analysis purposes.

Participants were provided their choice of methods for the interview to be conducted (either by phone or Skype) and times for which the interview took place. After agreeing to participate in the interview process, interviewees were provided the demographic survey. This demographic information was used to create unidentifiable biographical outlines of each participant. These coded aliases and biographies were used to assist in interview data analysis.

Interviews were conducted via methods agreed upon by the interviewer and interviewee. These locations varied but were private to prevent any breach in confidentiality. Participants will not be anonymous since the researcher will know their identity. Transcription and data analysis will be conducted in a secure setting. This will ensure the confidentiality of the participants.

Interviews were audio recorded and then transcribed. Transcriptions were then supplied to the specific interviewee for review allowing them to clarify or add to the interview data as they deemed necessary.

#### *Interviewee Alias Codes*

The interviewees were assigned a coded alias that will include biographical identifiers to the interviewees experience as a coach/athlete. This coded alias was used as the pseudonym for discussing the interviewee within this dissertation. These coded aliases were determined as follows:

- *Alias Coded with A:* Interviewee has reached a peak level of

National or Olympic athlete and has experience as a coach but is not currently in a coaching position.

- *Alias Coded with C:* Interviewee has not reached a peak athletic level of National or Olympic athlete but is currently a coach in their preferred sport.
- *Alias Coded with AC:* Interviewee has reached a peak level of National or Olympic athlete and is currently coaching in their preferred sport.

*Biography of Interviewees (See [Appendix E](#))*

***Interviewee A1:*** Interviewee A1 identified as a white female between the ages of 55-64. Interviewee A1 does not currently, but has in the past, belonged to the National Governing Body of their selected sport and does not currently coach. Interviewee A1 has competed at the Olympic level and obtained multiple Olympic medals. Interviewee A1's highest level of achieved education is a doctorate degree.

***Interviewee C1:*** Interviewee C1 identified as a white male between the ages of 45 and 54. The peak level Interviewee C1 has coached is high school, has been coaching between 1 and 5 years, and has never belonged to the National Governing Body of their sport. Interviewee C1's highest level of competition in sport was high school and is not the same sport that he currently coaches. Interviewee C1's highest level of achieved education is a master's degree.

***Interviewee C2:*** Interviewee C2 identified as a white male between the ages of 25 and 34. Interviewee C2's coaching peaked at the Olympic level, has been coaching between 11 and 15 years, and currently belongs to his chosen sport's National Governing Body, Interviewee C2



competed at the college level of his chosen sport and their highest level of achieved education is a master's degree.

***Interviewee C3:*** Interviewee C3 identified as a white female between the ages of 25 and 34. Interviewee C3's coaching peaked at the college level, has been coaching between 6 and 10 years, and currently belongs to her chosen sport's National Governing Body. Interviewee C3 competed at the college level of her chosen sport and her highest level of achieved education is a master's degree.

***Interviewee C4:*** Interviewee C4 identified as a white male between the ages of 55 and 64. Interviewee C4's coaching peaked at the Olympic level, has been coaching 21+ years, and currently belongs to their sports chosen National Governing Body. Interviewee C4 competed at the national/professional level of his chosen sport. His highest level of achieved education is a master's degree.

***Interviewee C5:*** Interviewee C5 identified as a white male between the ages of 25 and 34. Interviewee C5's coaching peaked at the college level, has been coaching between 6 and 10 years, and currently belongs to his chosen sport's National Governing Body. Interviewee C5 competed at the college level of their chosen sport and his highest level of achieved education is a master's degree.

***Interviewee C6:*** Interviewee C6 identified as a white male between the ages of 55 and 64. Interviewee C6's coaching peaked at a world competitor level, has been coaching between 16 and 20 years, and is a current member of their sports chosen National Governing Body.

Interviewee C6 competed at a world competitor level and his highest level of achieved education is a master's degree.

**Interviewee C7:** Interviewee C7 identified as a black or African American female between the ages of 45 and 54. Interviewee C7's coaching peaked at the high school level, has been coaching between 6 and 10 years, and is a current member of his chosen National Governing Body. Interviewee C7 competed at the college level and her highest level of achieved education is a doctorate degree.

**Interviewee AC1:** Interviewee AC1 identified as a white female between the ages of 45 and 54. The peak level Interviewee AC1 has coached at is national/professional competitors, has been coaching between 6 and 10 years, and currently belongs to this sport's National Governing Body. Interviewee AC1 has competed at the national/professional level and made the Olympic trials during her time as a competitor. Interviewee AC1's highest level of achieved education is a bachelor's degree.

**Interviewee AC2:** Interviewee AC2 identified as a white female between the ages of 45 and 54. Interviewee AC2's coaching peaked at the beginner/club level, has been coaching 21+ years, and is a current member of her chosen sport's National Governing Body. Interviewee AC2 has competed at the Olympic level and obtained an Olympic medal. Interviewee AC2's highest level of achieved education is a bachelor's degree.

**Interviewee AC3:** Interviewee AC3 identified as a white male between the ages of 35 and 44. Interviewee AC3's coaching peaked at the Olympic level, has been coaching between 6 and 10 years, and is a current member of his sports chosen National Governing Body. Interviewee

AC3 competed at the Olympic level and his highest level of achieved education is a bachelor's degree.

***Interviewee AC4:*** Interviewee AC4 identified as a female, classifies their ethnicity as other, and between the ages of 35 and 44. Interviewee AC4's coaching peaked at the national/professional competitor level, has been coaching between 11 and 15 years, and is a current member of her chosen National Governing Body. Interviewee AC4 competed at the Olympic level and obtained an Olympic medal. Interviewee AC4's highest level of obtained education is a master's degree.

***Interviewee AC5:*** Interviewee AC5 identified as a female, classifies their ethnicity as white, and between the ages of 55 and 64. Interviewee AC5's coaching peaked at the national/professional competitor level, has been coaching between 16 and 20 years, and is a current member of her chosen National Governing Body. Interviewee AC5 competed at the Olympic level but never competed in the Olympic Games due to the United States of America boycott of the Summer Olympics in 1980. Interviewee AC5's highest level of obtained education is a doctorate degree.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Findings and Data Analysis

*“To act in character is to be consistent with one’s best motives, intentions and dispositions; to act out of character is to betray all that is precious to oneself for the sake of moral compromise, expedience or utility.” -R.J. Nash (1996, p.72)*

Phenomenological research reports experiences of participants as they perceive them. Further, participants relate their experiences as conscious actions and reactions to specific phenomena. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the self-perception of ethical behavior in athletes and coaches. Two theories were identified prior to the interview process.

The research questions used to guide this study were:

“What are coaches’ perceptions of ethical behavior?”

“How do coaches define ethics?”

The identification of specific themes emerged during the interview process. These themes were reoccurring and added to the understanding of the responses to the questions. The overarching themes identified during the review of transcripts were the displeasure with national governing bodies (NGBs), family intervention, physical and emotional abuse, and long-term

consequences. These themes were identified as important to understand and include due to their relevance.

Chapter Four is organized by findings based on responses to the interview questions. The constructs of the conceptual framework were used to give meaning to participant responses to the interview questions. Findings include themes that emerged from the interviews, shared experiences and information from the interviewees that relates to the constructs. The findings are presented in the following manner: first, overview of findings for both research questions, themes that appear in the interviews are presented with description of each theme identified by its relationship to each of the research questions, which is followed by salient quotes from the interviewees related to these themes. Secondly, the constructs used in this study are divided into two groups based on the research question with which they correspond. Quotes from the interviewees are included to support the constructs of the conceptual framework.

Table 3: Research Questions and Conceptual Framework with Constructs

Research Question	Theory	Constructs	Attributes	Definition
What are coaches' perceptions of ethical behavior?	Self-Perception	Ethical Blind Spots	Not identifying an unethical situation	Bias, psychological traps
		Self-Deception	Develop individual rationale for unethical behavior	Knowing what to do vs actual actions
		Language Euphemisms	Self-selected language to rationalize meaning (motivating vs abusing)	Disguising word meaning
How do coaches define ethics?	Nash's Moral Languages	First Moral Language	Language identifying cultural, religious, social, or family contexts	Individuals background beliefs (zero-level of beliefs)
		Second Moral Language	Morals guided by community standards, norms, role expectations, and professional codes of ethics	Individuals actual ethical dilemmas and potential ethical growth
		Third Moral Language	Solution is agreed upon between professionals and client (ex. A code of ethics).	Procedural language set within abstract, general, and principle accounts

Participants were selected from a random list of potential participants that included coaches, former or current National or Olympic athletes, and coaches who were former National or Olympic athletes. Requests for participation were distributed via email and in person (when

asked to do so). Methods used to identify potential participants were by personal interaction and knowledge, and the information provided by the potential participant. Participants were provided their choice of methods for the interview to be conducted (either by phone, Skype or face-to-face), and times for which the interview took place. Table 4 provides a description of the current coaching role of each interviewee and the method the interview was conducted. The participant codes provided describe the type of athlete each code represents and are determined as follows:

- *Alias Coded with A*: Interviewee has reached a peak level of National or Olympic athlete and has experience as a coach but is not currently in a coaching position.
- *Alias Coded with C*: Interviewee has not reached a peak athletic level of National or Olympic athlete but is currently a coach in their preferred sport.
- *Alias Coded with AC*: Interviewee has reached a peak level of National or Olympic athlete and is currently coaching in their preferred sport.

*Table 4: Current Role and Interview Type of Participants*

<b>Interviewee Code</b>	<b>Current Role</b>	<b>Interview Type</b>
A1	Former Olympian	Face-to-Face
C1	High School Coach	Skype
C2	Olympic Coach	Skype
C3	College Coach	Telephone
C4	Olympic Coach	Face-to-Face
C5	College Coach	Telephone
C6	World Competitor Coach	Telephone
C7	High School Coach	Telephone
AC1	National/Professional Coach	Skype
AC2	Beginner Level Coach	Telephone
AC3	Olympic Coach	Skype
AC4	National/Professional Coach	Telephone
AC5	National/Professional Coach	Telephone

The researcher conducted thirteen interviews. Interviewees were asked to complete a demographic survey prior to the interview. This demographic survey included information related to the interviewees' age, gender, ethnicity, coaching experience, and athletic experience. Questions and results of this survey are provided in [Appendix D](#) and [Appendix E](#). Upon completion of the demographic survey, interviews were conducted and transcribed for data analysis purposes.

To preserve the integrity of the findings, all the interviewees' quotes included in this dissertation were taken verbatim from the transcribed interviews and expressed in their own vernacular. Discretion was used in omitting identifying words or information that would potentially identify the interviewees to protect their anonymity.



What are coaches' perceptions of ethical behavior?

The researcher analyzed transcripts recorded verbatim to identify common experiences and themes based upon open-ended interviews. The athletes, athlete/coaches, and coaches who participated in this study came from a variety of athletic disciplines (Gymnastics, Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball, Baseball, Swimming, Fencing, and Basketball). Though all these athletic disciplines fall under the United States Olympic Committees (USOC) umbrella, all are governed differently by their respective National Governing Bodies (NGBs).

Until 1992, when the USOC issued a Coaching Code of Ethics providing a guide for the minimum standards coaches are expected to abide by, all the NGB's were expected to independently develop and govern their own policies and standards. Findings from this research also reflect the varied roles of the participants. They were athletes or coaches in the vast variety of sports in which they were actively involved, but there is no explanation for the lack of their developmental knowledge of the policies governing their sport.

Participants' perceptions of ethical coaching practice were influenced by years of observing other coaches and observing other relationships that are similar to coaching, such as parenting. What participants learned from those years of observation was that there are no firm guiding principles, ideals, or practices other than doing what is necessary to win. Participants treated the ethical guidelines established by their national associations as they treated the rules of their sport. That is, anything that is not explicitly disallowed by the rules is allowed and if they could cheat without getting caught then they would do it. Coaches within these athletic

organizations are “still arguing about it (ethical guidelines)” and continue to be “abusive emotionally and physically” to their athletes.

How do coaches define ethics?

From the data collected in this dissertation, the participants in this study did not articulate a clear or consistent understanding of the ethics of coaching, either individually or collectively. Rather than provide a clear and coherent description of the ethical ideas that influenced their practices as coaches and athletes, participants offered ambiguously constructed examples to not indicate ethical wrongdoing or to incriminate themselves. Examples such as the use of programs “micromanaging” while attempting to protect the athletes from harm or talking “to the town police and campus police to make sure everyone was on the same page” regarding athlete misconduct were constructed in such a manner to prevent direct indication of wrongdoing on the part of the participants.

The participants came from different levels of coaching, different athletic experiences, and vastly different backgrounds, yet they demonstrated signs that the foundation of their ethical “ground zero” was developed as a result of exposure to others’ ethical/unethical decisions. These conditions as well as the differences in the norms of NGB policy and expectations of behavior, both stated and inferred, support the fact that there was little common ground among participants in perceptions or definitions of ethical behavior. Consequently, the participants’ answers to the questions asked during this research showed no unified agreement on what ethics are.

The coaches in this study used the language of ethics (1) to describe the wrongdoing of other coaches and athletes, and (2) to control the behavior of their athletes to avoid

embarrassment for themselves. However, they did not seem inclined to hold themselves to the same (or higher) standards they set for others.

### Themes

The major themes that appeared from the interviews were: displeasure with national governing bodies (NGBs), family intervention, physical and emotional abuse of coaches, and long-term consequences. These themes were referenced in most, if not all, of the responses of the thirteen participants.

*Research Question: What are coaches' perception of ethical behavior?*

#### Theme One: Displeasure with National Governing Bodies (NGBs)

Displeasure with the National Governing Bodies (NGBs) was an overwhelming theme emerging from the data. Participants referred to collective displeasure with the lack of support that governing bodies provided and was mentioned from both the athlete and the coaching perspectives. Of the individuals that were classified as either athlete or athlete/coach,  $\approx 67\%$  (4 of the 6) of the participants indicated displeasure with their NGB while only  $\approx 29\%$  (2 of the 7) of the participants identified as coaches felt this same displeasure.

The discussion of NGBs included the lack of ethical guidance and the fact that NGBs become stricter with the athletes as they move into higher levels of competition:

*"In United States Swimming, is... Here's the ethics that we follow in United States Swimming. This is what we do. This is the oath that we take as coaches that we're not*

*going to f\*\*k our swimmers. It's so ridiculous to me that we would even need to have that s\*\*t. United States Swimming just came up with some codes of conduct. Really in 2013- that's when they just figured out that you shouldn't be having relationships with your swimmers? People are still arguing about it 5 years later."* -Interviewee AC1

*"The higher you go, the more they put a stronghold on what you can and cannot do and can and cannot say either directly or indirectly."* -Interviewee C7

Certain interviewees expressed displeasure with the lack of credentials/certifications that are required by their respective NGBs:

*"I have no idea how good someone is as a teacher or a coach because we don't have a credential organization. For me, it's basically the Wild West here in the United States and as the sport goes and becomes more 'professional.' Our national governing body is not someone I ever talk to about any of those expectations. They don't set any expectations. All they do is ask for money for membership. They ask us to do Safe Sport. We only receive our insurance if we go through Safe Sport training. They're never going to give us anything. They only take money from us. It would be nice to have some sort of systematic way for some more education. They do offer things, but far and few in between. I don't rely on my national governing body for anything."* -Interviewee AC4

*"US Fencing itself did not have a formal training program for its coaching staff at all. The coaching staff... It's coaches that work under their supervision. "This is how we expect you to teach people. This is the type of program we expect." They leave that side*

*of the Do's and how things get done up to the coaches. The only thing they give us guidelines for are 'Dont's'.*" -Interviewee C5

Participants also noted concern for lack of vetting an individual to coach or assist in the athletic participation by NGBs:

*"My husband coaches the kindergarten soccer team. And what allows him to do that? He's not vetted, he didn't sign anything, he's not doing any Safe Sport. How do you create an atmosphere of professionalism for teaching and coaching?"* -Interviewee AC4

## Theme Two: Long-Term Consequences

The theme of long-term consequences was also present in the interviews. Schermuly (2014) states that coaches have powerful social impact on their athletes, and the socio-emotional anxieties in a relationship between a coach and an athlete can result in long-term negative effects like emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced accomplishment. Of the interviewees that participated in this study, 100% indicated that in some manner (both positive and negative) their coaching style or long-term health was affected by a coach they had previously either been coached by or worked with.

Interviewee AC4 discussed the effect her coach had on her ability to adjust to failure during life after sports:

*"When you're an adult trying to deal with emotional things that you have to fail without someone screaming and yelling at you, it's hard. It's taken me a very long time to unravel the effects of what he was like. You take someone who's a good athlete who works really hard, puts their head down and works, then you include in that the one driving and*

*ripping them. Then when they become an adult with a mind of their own, they unravel very quickly.”*

Interviewee C2 indicated that even coaches they would not model themselves after still affected the way they coach:

*“I would say probably not one coach. I would say a group of coaches. Even I would say I find this all the time that I have little pieces of things from coaches that at large I would not model myself after them at all. Some of the worst coaches I had, I do have some aspect of what I feel is modeled by them.”*

*Research Question: How do coaches define ethics?*

### Theme Three: Family Intervention

Family intervention was another theme that participants addressed throughout the interviews. This is expressed both from the athletic experience and the coaching experience. Though Brown et al. (2016) indicate that family intervention in physical activities can be effective, and the lack of family intervention may restrict success, the interviewees provided information that indicated not all family involvement is good. During the interviews, ≈58.3% (3 athlete/coach, 4 coach; 5 females, 2 males) indicated some intervention in their athletic or coaching experience.

Of all who discussed this theme, only Interviewee C7 indicated family intervention as a positive factor:

*“My coaches were nowhere near as good, but I have had really great models from my grandpa to my mother watching her, watching a good coach. It’s just been a pleasure. I can’t talk enough of what they did and continue to emulate and be a model of what they have done and to keep it alive. It is important to keep these traits and characteristics of coaching and mentoring and don’t let them fall by the wayside...I jump off the coaching methods of my grandpa and really base everything off of his foundation that he set. For me for my athletes, when you come in as an athlete it’s sportsmanship, it’s the courageousness, it’s the leadership.”” -Interviewee C7*

The expression of family not understanding what is not only good for the progress of their child(ren) in sport:

*“My parents are immigrants to this country so for them they were like “This person is a subject-matter expert so tell us what to do and we follow it and then we just go from there.” My mother’s Asian so there was no questioning the teacher... For me, those are difficult situations dealing with that, and also dealing with parents, Parents have these crazy high expectations sometimes. I think they’re always afraid to have their kids be bad, or emotional about something.” -Interviewee AC4*

But having a level of disconnect from the environment that the child(ren) is/are subject to:

*“I got out, I called my dad and I went home, and I refused to go back to practice because I was deeply hurt by it. My dad was really pissed off because I wouldn’t tell him what happened, and he was like “Well why don’t you want to go to practice? You have Nationals in 2 weeks.” I said, “I don’t want to go there.”” -Interviewee AC1*

Family intervention was also presented by one interviewee that expressed their family's negative feelings towards his choice to become an athletic coach:

*"Much to my parents' chagrin, I decided I wanted to coach."* -Interviewee C2

#### Theme Four: Physical and Emotional Abuse

The theme of physical and emotional abuse was present in several interviews. All interviewees that provided data related to physical or emotional abuse indicated these happenings while they were athletes. None of the interviewees stated any indication of abuse towards their athletes, but Bachand & Djak (2018) indicates that some individuals could be suffering from Stockholm syndrome, which does not specifically mean the abuse is not happening. Self-perceptions could be inaccurate, narcissistic, and consistently more positive than is justified by the perception of others (John & Robins, 1994) which leads an individual to believe they are not doing wrong.

The physical abuse described below was actually experienced by the participant:

*"He was abusive emotionally and physically. He would hit us with the weapon if we didn't do something. If we didn't do something immediately, he would go into a rage and hit us with his weapon. I was cut along my arms and legs. I would wear long pants and long sleeves in the summertime because I didn't want people to ask me questions about my arms and legs. We would show up, he would hit me so much that someone would say 'I'm gonna call the police on him.'"* -Interviewee AC4



Or as a workout for punishment:

*“If I wasn’t doing something correctly, which I always felt like when I was a swimmer- that nothing I ever did was good enough even pushing off the wall I didn’t do correctly. We all had to do butterfly or something, that was big punishment back when I was swimming. Or we’re all going to do flies for 5,000.” -Interviewee AC1*

As well as those who witnessed the abuse:

*“I feel like my coaches were super abusive, throwing things at people. Coaches were having tantrums and staff back then.” -Interviewee AC1*

And the presence of emotional abuse:

*“I go to this guy, [REDACTED], and sure enough he was having a relationship with a 16-year-old on the team. He was 33 at the time. I just thought he wasn’t going to work with me. I was wrong. He tried to use me to make his girlfriend jealous. There was no flirting or anything between us, but she was pissed that he would spend time with me. By spending time, I mean coach me.” -Interviewee A1*

And had direct emotional effects on the athlete:

*“I felt bad most of my swimming career. No matter what I did I was not good enough and basically my coach hated me.” -Interviewee AC1*

## Findings

*Research Question: What are coaches' perception of ethical behavior?*

### *Ethical Blind Spots*

Table 17 illustrates the construct of ethical blind spots classified under the theory of self-perception. Self-perceptions exhibit prevalent and enduring falsehoods, and the basic motive of the systematic departure from self-conceptions is based in the reality of self-enhancement (Taylor & Brown, 1988), around an illusion of authenticity (Lewinsohn et al., 1980), to which a normally healthy individual is prone (Paulhus and Reid, 1991). Ethical blind spots are defined within the self-perception theory as the bias or psychological traps that coaches use to not identify an unethical situation.

*Table 5: Ethical Blind Spots Construct Framework Relationship to Research Question*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Theory</b>	<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
What are coaches' perceptions of ethical behavior?	Self-Perception	Ethical Blind Spots	Bias, psychological traps	Not identifying an unethical situation	2,3,6,7,8

When asked, “What kinds of directives, rules, or procedures does your organization provide (related to ethics),” ≈92% (12 of the 13 participants) replied that their governing bodies did not provide or promote the idea that this type of training was available to coaches. The interviewee responses did not provide any data that would show this question being directed towards ethical blind spots in coaching but did provide the possibility of the NGBs themselves having such blind spots.

When interviewees were asked, “Do you have any expectations or guidelines that your athletes are expected to follow,”  $\approx 77\%$  (10 of 13 participants) discussed basic rules and regulations that were set by either themselves as coaches, or coaches they had experienced as athletes. Improper coach/athlete relationships were discussed in detail, including sexual relationships with coaches and under aged athletes’ and other sexuality driven experiences. In a few cases, these incidences were not viewed as an issue by the coaches or even recognized until presented to them by either parent or relative of the athlete.

Interviewee AC1 described the use of excessive exercise as punishment by a prior coach and then their use of the same actions while coaching:

*“—if people came in late, they either got kicked out of practice or had to do burpees or something like that. I’ve used burpees as punishment or pushups or something like that.”*

Interviewee AC1 further described their coaching experience and the misidentification of an unethical situation which they did not expect:

*“This bullying really got to the point where anybody that I would talk to individually they would start getting picked on. It really just became this--I was getting calls from parents about how upset their kids were and this kid didn’t want to come back to practice. It was really bad and very unexpected. I never even saw this coming.”*

Gender discrimination as an ethical blind spot also was found in the interview data. The identification of a certain genders (in this research both male and female) having “drama” issues when they are grouped together was stated as fact by the interviewee. The concept of ethical blind spots to justify actions that are not only unethical, but would have been (and historically

had been) allowed, if not for the change in view of sexual harassment and what could be classified as ‘toxic masculinity’.

Interviewee AC3 used the justification of the sport being filled with teenage boys to blind the unethical situation:

*“You know fencing is filled with teenage boys. Combined with sexual harassment and stuff that’s been going on we’ve had boys who like to go around the club and pull each other’s shorts down.”*

Interviewee C5 used gender identification as a blinding factor in the same manner except aimed towards female athletes:

*“When you have a large group of women in close quarters at all times, there’s going to be drama. You can’t avoid it, you can’t help it, it’s going to be there.”*

Exercise as punishment occurs when a coach requires an athlete to perform extreme physical activity beyond the normal capacity of the individual as punishment for breaking a rule or underperforming. Some states have labeled this as ‘corporal punishment’ and made it illegal (Lavay, French, & Henderson, 2015). The use of this form of punishment and not finding it harmful or wrong supports this as an ethical blind spot. When Interviewee AC1 was asked if she had any expectations or guidelines that her athletes were expected to follow, the idea of exercise as punishment was identified in her response.

*“I’ve always wanted my swimmers to breathe every 3 on freestyle and that’s based on keeping their body balanced so I’m super vigilant about that. Making an entire group*

*start over if people aren't following that after I've given them a maximum of 3 redirections."*

When interviewees were asked, "Besides rules and regulations, are there any other guidelines that describe what is expected of coaches," the replies were 100% related to there not being any form of guideline related to what is expected of a coach other than teaching techniques and rules of the chosen sport. This again could be labeled an ethical blind spot on the part of the NGBs, only one interviewee (AC2) expressed situations that are ethically blind and against that which is the governing of sports:

*"I'll coach high levels at camps. Those camps are not US Gymnastics sanctioned events. They do not follow under any rules or policies."*

When the interviewees were asked, "Do you model yourself after a coach from your past," multiple interviewees stated that they did model themselves after coaches they had while athletes. These same individuals expressed issues with these coaches regarding such things as bullying, abuse, and questionable coaching practices while stating that they either currently or historically had participated in such actions as coaches. Though several did express an understanding that their prior coaches' actions were unacceptable, there was no indication that they believed their actions (of the same nature) were unethical at the time they participated in these acts.

Of the three interviewees (A1, AC1, AC4) that had discussed abusive coaches (See Theme, [Physical and Emotional Abuse](#)), those coded as athlete/coach provided data that expressed a disconnect of understanding between right and wrong as athletes and this same

disconnect while coaching. As they further discussed their experiences, these individuals did begin to try and explain their actions (as to express a defense or justification of said actions).

Interviewee A1 made this statement expressing the lack of understanding the situation leading to this situation:

*“I didn’t understand why another team member was so upset about him (coach) marrying somebody else.”*

When interviewees were asked, “Could you define ethics,” terms related to the use of rules as a form of ethical guidelines was dominate. Nash (1996) describes ethics as the abstract ideas that guide a human’s essential assumptions associated with the nature of reality and what individuals experience as good or bad, right, or wrong, important, or unimportant. One of the interviewees, who is a practicing attorney, struggled to answer this question initially which would beg to ask the question if a lawyer struggles to define ethics, should we expect coaches to be able to?

Nash’s definition eliminates the use of rules and laws as assistance to ethical decision making. Those interviewees that used this indicating factor to define ethics support the presence of an ethical blind spot. Interviewee C3 expressed the lack of ability or want to change and a lack of ethical choosing:

*“I think you are who you are, and you follow rules if you have to.”*

## *Self-Deception*

Table 18 illustrates the construct of self-deception as it pertains to the theory of self-perception.

*Table 6: Self-Deception Construct Framework Relationship to Research Question*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Theory</b>	<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
What are coaches' perceptions of ethical behavior?	Self-Perception	Self-Deception	Knowing what to do vs actual actions	Develop individual rationale for unethical behavior	2,4,5,6

Festinger (1962) describes self-deception as a discrepancy between knowing how an individual is supposed to act and how they actually act. This includes such mechanisms as projection, displacement, denial (Moss & Sanchez, 2004), escaping the truth, the lies we tell, and the secrets an individual keeps from themselves (Bok, 1989). The belief that these acts of personal oversight blur the obligation of responsibility, which causes self-bias and moves the blame from self to others (Ritov & Baron, 1990) clarifies the attribute of self-deception developed by an individual's rationale for unethical behavior.

Self-deception was identified in all four questions that were labeled prior to the interview process. The data which these interviewees provided, resonated highly with that which Ritov and Baron (1990) stated as the shifting of blame from self to others. When interviewees were asked what kinds of directives, rules, or procedures their organization provided, Interviewee AC1 identified prior coaches at fault for their motives or unethical actions:

*“I started off almost saying word-for-word different things that I was told as a swimmer. I was basically told the same thing with all of the coaches I had back when I swam. Like ‘It’s not a democracy, it’s a dictatorship.’ ‘My way or the highway.’ I’m embarrassed that I actually used those terms, but it was something--that’s what I heard my entire coaching career, all those types of things. ‘If you don’t like it get out.’ It was addictive...”*

When interviewees were asked if they ever experienced a situation during their coaching career in which they had to make a difficult decision or had to resolve a difficult situation, 100% of the interviewees stated that at some point in their careers they had a decision that would be classified as an ethical conundrum. Some of the interviewees even discussed situations during their athletic careers that created situations in which difficult decisions were made. Interviewee AC1 expressed this in her reply:

*“I think in my situation, obviously, I probably would never have lived with my coach because that would have been problematic. But that doesn’t mean he wouldn’t have found a way to abuse me. I already knew he was screwing somebody on my team when I moved in with him. It would make it more difficult for things, but I think things would have happened anyways.”*

When follow-up question (a) was asked, “Could you describe how you handled the situation and why you handled it the way you did,” the ability to verbally communicate the ‘why’ was very difficult based the lack of inclusion in the replies. The data shows the simplicity of verbally communicating the action of ‘how’ but the ‘why’ was missing in all that identified.



Some of the interviewees directed their replies expressing situations from their athletic careers such as Interviewee AC2 who replied:

*“We ended up having a secondary camp where 6 of us qualified from Olympic trials to the camp and then we had the 2 extra girls at the camp. We had 8 kids at the camp. From those 8 kids, we had 2 days of training and we had to show our routines. Then the coaches went back and voted on who they wanted on the team. Only 7 of us made it, so there was 1 girl who didn’t make it. We never saw her after that. In my career, that was probably the shadiest, unclear event that we didn’t know how to handle as athletes. We were young, and we hadn’t made the rules.”*

When follow-up question (b) was asked, “What was the impact of your decision,” all identified could verbally communicate the visual change the decision created, but the data shows that none of those identified related the impact to any indicator of self-change, or it being their fault the actions occurred initially. Interviewee AC4 used this quote to express not only how you can abuse a young athlete to get fast results but the issues it caused her later in life:

*“If you want to make an athlete good really fast at a really young age, you treat them like that. It doesn’t mean they’ll be a good athlete in adulthood, which I wasn’t because I wasn’t able to process failure very well on my own when I left him.”*

Interviewee C4, while discussing a coach’s duties and responsibilities, made this statement while discussing the duty of a coach to protect their athletes. The specific athlete being discussed during this conversation had been arrested by the authorities for a matter that was not disclosed by the participant:

*“We obviously talked to the town police and campus police to make sure everyone was on the same page.”*

Interviewee C3 discussed the stress related to building a successful program as well as the ulterior motives in helping these athletes succeed:

*“Building a softball program here has been very hard, very stressful. The three months in the season I am a different person. I am mean to people and am constantly stressed, constantly tired but it’s worth it... As a coach I get to play a little role in shaping them to hopefully be an amazing person that can get a great job or go to grad school and hopefully donate money back to the softball program.”*

Interviewee C6 expressed the coach’s roll as a mediator between the athletic department and the athletes, and not only expressed a self-perception issue, but also an ethical conundrum:

*“We had another one this year where they pulled someone out of competition completely healthy. So, we had conflicts like that. I guess as a coach you’re in this middle position between athletic department and your athletes. We play this role in between the 2 and our default position is to be on the side of our athletes and our job is to make it easy for them to perform to the best of their ability.”*

When interviewees were asked if there are any other guidelines that describe what is expected of coaches, all indicated that it is their job to provide skills and techniques to better the athletes’ performance. These interviewees also made statements that lead this researcher to believe that they were intentionally ‘bending’ rules and guidelines set by NGBs that are meant to protect these athletes outside of sport. Interviewee C5 made this deception clear in the statement:

*“I will say this, and this is my own observation-Just talking with other coaches, while there are these structures written out by the NCAA not all teams follow it at all. The NCAA limits structured hours where coaches can be involved. There’s a captains’ practice-you don’t have to be present for that. They can start exceeding the limits of the NCAA.”*

The separation of ideas supports the result of coaches having issues with self-deception in their statements of what is expected and the actions they display.

The interviewees also expressed that all the organizations in which they chose to be involved, provided little to no structure outside of basic rules of the game and teaching the techniques for game play. Interviewees also stated their displeasure with the NGBs in lack of structure and assistance to the nurturing of coaches. National Governing Bodies (NGBs) have started to provide rules and guidelines to coaches and staffs to prevent physical, mental, and emotional misconduct. Interviewee C7 discussed her playing career and the lack of protection from herself, and the physical harm that may occur, by athletic staff:

*“I made this decision because as an athlete at the stage all I wanted was to play and not necessarily take into consideration the condition of my knee twenty years down the line. If I tell you how painful it is now, it is not nice. You knew you shouldn’t have been doing it that was the whole point. No, you’re not supposed to put shots in your ankle, but you want to because you want to play in this game. That was probably one of the more difficult ones that I had. It was difficult that I had to leave University of Washington. It was a difficult situation that had to be resolved where there was confrontation with*

*myself and the weight coach. I've had a lot of coaches, I knew what it was, and I needed to get myself out of that situation."*

### *Language Euphemisms*

Table 19 illustrates the construct of language euphemisms as it pertains to the theory of self-perception.

*Table 7: Language Euphemisms Construct Framework Relationship to Research Question*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Theory</b>	<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
What are coaches' perceptions of ethical behavior?	Self-Perception	Language Euphemisms	Disguising word meaning	Self-selected language to rationalize meaning (motivating vs abusing)	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9

Language euphemisms are disguised stories an individual tells themselves to make unethical conduct reputable and is a harmful weapon (Bandura, 1999). Albert Speer (1970), a member of the Nazi Germany government and Hitler's innermost circle of advisors, discusses how during the design of the munitions factories he was very knowledgeable of the handling of the prisoners but by relabeling himself as an 'architect' or 'administrator,' was able to convince himself that worrying about these individuals was not his job. Language euphemisms in themselves are not dangerous, but when they are used to avoid the complexity inherent in ethical dilemma, they can become dangerous (Bok, 1989).

When the interviewees were asked, “What was the impact of your decision (follow up question to, ‘Have you ever experienced a situation during your coaching/athletic career in which you had to make a difficult decision or had to resolve a difficult situation?’),” Interviewee C6 was the only individual to provide data related to this construct. The language used by Interviewee C6 indicated a controlling nature and the belief of others in their organization to ‘micromanage’ their program.

*“It’s led me to step up on how I’m going to protect my athletes from--when the problems come from the department whether it’s the trainers or administrators down towards us, they like to micromanage. They’re distant but they try to manage what goes on with the team. I guess last year led me to be a stronger advocate for athletes. We felt what they’re doing is not appropriate.”*

When the interviewees were asked what they believe the duties and responsibilities of a coach are, Interviewee AC2 is identified as the only participant to use language euphemisms in their response. The discussion of evolution in the coaching profession as the reason for change in their methods indicates change was forced and not chosen.

*“Coaching has evolved so much over the last 20 years that I feel like back then my coaches were very singularly focused.”*

When interviewees were asked, “Besides rules and regulations, are there any other guidelines that describe what is expected of coaches,” Interviewee AC2 indicated that psychology has been used in the coaching profession for those who are ‘broken.’ This language

euphemism is expressed when the interviewee discusses that lack of understanding can become a crutch for those individuals using such methods.

*“Psychology has always been the field in our sport, for the broken. It has a very negative association with it. They don’t understand that it’s not that.”*

When interviewees were asked if they model yourself after a coach from their past, Interviewee AC3 described the distance that the coach kept between them explaining that a language gap could have been to blame.

*“It was a bit distant. Not quite all business but very close to it. We had a communication gap because he didn’t speak English great. There was always that. I think he kept me at a distance on purpose as part of his method.”*

When interviewees were asked if they believe teaching ethics would make change in athletics, Interviewee A1 used the description of soldiers as athletes.

*“Unfortunately, we live in this crazy culture that tells athletes that they’re a bit like soldiers and that they’re supposed to do everything their coach tells them to do.”*

*Research Question- How Do Coaches Define Ethics?*

*Nash's First Moral Language*

*Table 8: First Moral Language Construct Framework Relationship to Research Question*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Theory</b>	<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
How do coaches define ethics?	Nash's Moral Languages	First Moral Language	Individuals background beliefs (zero-level of beliefs)	Language identifying cultural, religious, social, or family contexts	1,5,7,8

Nash (2002) states that the First Moral Language centers in an individual's background beliefs, which are described as the "'metaphysical basement' (the zero-level of beliefs) to understand their unique, "inescapable" horizons of meanings, their ethical centers of reference" (Nash, 2002, p.40). Cooper and Wisbey (2003) describe this first language as an individual's moral position derived from their cultural, religious, social, and family contexts and/or the interpretation of said influences. By using the first language to identify ethical judgements, decisions, and actions, one can interpret what is profoundly important to that individual (Nash, 1996).

The First Moral Language is not used by individuals to solve concrete problems, but rather find an individual's beliefs center of reference (Nash, 1996). Nash uses Smart's (1983) work to emphasize that an individual's worldview is formed in the foundation that individuals background and can be classified in six dimensions (Doctrinal (fundamental principles), Mythic (stories with special sacred meanings), Ethical (prescribed rules and regulations), Ritual

(ceremonial customs), Experiential (expression of egotistical feelings), and Social (groups or organizations)). These six dimensions are used as potential identifying ethical factors.

When the interviewees were asked to provide a brief overview of their experience as a coach/athlete, Interviewee C2 cited examples of a specific coach to identify their belief of a “really great coach” based on other experiences in the culture of sport.

*“I decided I wanted to be a coach when I was 14 years old. I actually had a really great coach that year and that was sort of what led me to that decision. He was very different from other swim coaches I had a really good time swimming for him that year.”*

Although Question 2, “What kinds of directives, rules, or procedures does your organization provide,” was not identified as potentially providing data related to this construct, Interviewee A1 identified the culture of coaching in their chosen sport and the lack of written rules.

*“We had no formal rules in terms of coaches being alone with us, allowed to yell at us or coaches allowed to over train us. There was nothing formally written down.”*

Although Question 3, “Do you have any expectations or guidelines that your athletes are expected to/coach expected you to follow,” was not identified initially as potentially providing data related to this construct, Interviewee C4 used the rule of open dialog penalties to allow each situation to be interpreted independently. This quote would classify as family context of ethics based on the identification of an athletic team being a family.



*“In baseball we have one rule and, pardon my French, but my one rule is don’t f\*\*\* up. That allows me the capability of interpreting situations that may occur because I’ve been in places of a system where we tried to have a penalty for each possible circumstance and it just didn’t work.”*

Interviewee AC1 indicated an expectation of culture in their athletic program and coaching methods.

*“I’ve always wanted my swimmers to breathe every 3 on freestyle and that’s based on keeping their body balanced so I’m super vigilant about that. Making an entire group start over if people aren’t following that after I’ve given them a maximum of 3 redirections.”*

When the interviewees were asked if they model themselves after a coach from your past, Interviewee AC1 discussed a family situation that developed their ethical beliefs related to coaches.

*“Even though I said some things, I recall things my father said to me growing up and I’m like “I’m never going to be like my dad.” It’s kind of like that where you hear yourself say something and it’s like “Oh yeah, my coaches used to say that to me.””*

## *Nash's Second Moral Language*

*Table 9: Second Moral Language Construct Framework Relationship to Research Question*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Theory</b>	<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
How do coaches define ethics?	Nash's Moral Languages	Second Moral Language	Individuals actual ethical dilemmas and potential ethical growth	Morals guided by community standards, norms, role expectations, and professional codes of ethics	1,3,4,9

Nash (2002) states that the Second Moral Language has a much more colorful response to ethics than the first or third and is the language of 'thick description' (p.58). "In addition to living in a metaphysical life space, where we speak a more private, foundational, and philosophical language, we also live in a number of small, tangible communities, where we speak a "thick" language of feeling, memory, intuition, and imagination, a language that St. Anselm believed God speaks" (Nash, 2002, p. 59). Cooper and Wisbey (2003) clarify the Second Moral Language to be that which is guided by community standards, norms, role expectations and professional codes of ethics.

The Second Moral Language is centered in the framework for understanding individuals' actual ethical dilemmas and offers the possibility to identify an individual's ethical growth in a specific situation (Nash, 1996). Callahan (1991) believes much of an individual's rational thinking process is conducted nonconscious and the process is unavailable, unnoticed, or unappreciated by our conscious phenomenological awareness. Nash (1996) recognizes the use of personal stories as essential if individuals are truly to know themselves.

When the interviewees were asked to provide a brief overview of their experience as a coach, Interviewee C4 discussed a moral decision guided by their athletic department that they believe would have been handled differently if allowed to follow their personal beliefs on the situation.

*I think it's unusual in that our focus is on coaching and winning games but at the same time maybe even more so than most places what the experience for the student athlete is like as a whole... We had a situation a number of years ago where we had a player that I wanted to dismiss from the team, or I was close to it. I was counseled by the higher ups that I probably didn't need to do that. I think it was directly related to the fact to the positive impact that athlete could have with our team in the field."*

While Interviewee C7 discussed the ability to distinguish their chosen ethical position based on their role expectations of how a coach should act.

*"It was definitely difficult because I recognized early on what good coaching looked like and I'm looking at my coach like 'That's not a good coach'. I was able to get out and go to another one but a lot of athletes...we just don't have any option."*

Although Question 2, "What kinds of directives, rules, or procedures does your organization provide," did not evoke specific responses related to this construct, Interviewee A1 expresses their belief about cheating done by other competitors. This statement is based in their belief, at the time, of a code of ethics in sports and a community standard which was later verified and known as "State Plan Theme 14-25" or the 1976 Montreal Olympic Doping Scandal (Spitzer, 2006).

*“When the East German and Russian team came in at different times and worked out with my team, they cheated in practice.”*

When participants were asked if there were any expectations or guidelines that were expected to follow in their sport, Interviewee AC1 provided an example of role expectations of self.

*“I was pretty stubborn when I was a swimmer. If I wasn’t doing something correctly, which I always felt like when I was a swimmer-that nothing I ever did was good enough even pushing off the wall I didn’t do correctly.”*

Interviewees AC2 and C3 provided examples of ethical dilemmas provided by their chosen communities’ standards and expectations as well as potential ethical growth.

*“Coaching camps is a little more difficult because these kids come without their coaches and so you don’t want to change technique or change to where coaches don’t want them to go to camp.”*

*“We had a lot of drama with captains last year. What happened was someone wasn’t chosen as captain and she was never going to be a captain because she wasn’t captain material and wasn’t voted by her teammates as a captain. It escalated into something I would have never predicted. She ended up filing a suit against me that I discriminated against her because she had ADD and that’s why I didn’t make her a captain. It was discriminating against a disability, so she filed a complaint with that title. It was ridiculous, and they had to do an investigation. Luckily, I kept the ballet, so our Title IX coordinator said, “Send me the ballet that will be easy”. No discrimination was filed*

*because that was ridiculous, but it was the scariest thing. That's kind of the climate we are coaching in right now. I added a captain expectation. I laid out the process for how we're going to determine captains, what is expected of the captain and what it looks like being a captain so that's hopefully to prevent the situation from happening."*

When the interviewees were asked, "Have you ever experienced a situation during your coaching/athletic career in which you had to make a difficult decision or had to resolve a difficult situation," Interviewee AC4 showed not only an ethical dilemma, but also the potential of ethical growth based on the same experience.

*"I've made some mistakes too. I sat a kid in a meeting room, and I talked to them and I closed the door. Now we have certain policies like don't close the door."*

When asked about the impact of their decision, Interviewee AC1 used an example of past experiences with coaches and the belief that their performance would suffer due to culture change. This example shows the role expectation of this individual's perception of what a coach should be and their ethical growth following the change in community.

*"The thing is they all basically coached the same way and that's how I thought things were until I went to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] was my coach. I actually was like "I'm going to swim horrible because he's way too nice, too nice. He's not being mean to me. Practices aren't hard enough." I would actually ask him "Hey can I go over to that lane and do some more" because I wasn't doing enough. I wasn't being tortured. Every single day it was like I wasn't going to swim wellbeing verbally abused. I look back and that's how I felt because when you're going through it you don't know that."*

Interviewee AC2 discussed an ethical dilemma regarding their experience in qualifying for the Olympics and how this experience allowed for potential ethical growth.

*“You have the athletes who make the Olympic team and make their dream come true and a group of kids who were happy to compete. Then you have a small group of kids that truly had a chance but didn’t make it and I think those are the kids most negatively affected. Those are the kids that we have to give the most compassion too. Every 4 years when the Olympics comes up, I know that it deeply still affects us, the girl that was essentially not with us. Some say she was kicked off the team. The rules were very unclear for us or they weren’t told to us in detail. I think as far as how it impacts me for the future is, I’m very empathetic and compassionate with the kids in her situation.”*

Interviewee C2 also provided an example of an ethical dilemma that uses a comparison between two different communities.

*“In the end I felt really good that we had done it, but it was a source of continued conflict between myself and my boss, for sure... I was pretty surprised that things were so different both at [REDACTED] and then [REDACTED] and it just didn’t seem right to me that we were going to do that. Especially since it felt strange. It wasn’t a written-out policy. It seemed like there was a reason why we didn’t write it down because he knew it wasn’t right. But we were still going to enforce some unwritten thing anyway just because we could, and that didn’t seem right to me.”*

Although Question 5, “What do you believe the duties and responsibilities of a coach are,” did not specifically relate to this construct, Interviewee A1 used an example of a

community standard related to what is considered normal in such an environment and the potential ethical growth of their former coach.

*“All my coaches were really lousy when it came to nutritional advice. My coach gave me a very, very hard time about my weight until I had a body fat percentage test done. Most of the swimmers were at about 20% and my biggest competitor was 22%. I weighed 30 pounds more than her and I was at 11% body fat. It was wonderful, I never had to get on the scale. My coach was trying to have me weigh what my competitor weighs, just crazy ideas on not eating until you get to the way you want.”*

Although Question 7, “Do you model yourself after a coach from your past,” did not specifically relate to this construct, Interviewee AC2 explained her change in coaching style as her experience in the chosen community progressed and allowed for potential ethical growth.

*“My coaching style has evolved. I think its evolved in the last 10 years because I work a lot with the kids on the deep performance and mental side of the sport, so I hear how they interpret what coaches say to them. It’s made me grow as a coach because I have a much more deep understanding the impact of my words.”*

While Interviewee AC3 discussed using techniques his coach used, he describes having a different relationship with his athletes than he perceived him and his coach to have had.

*“I use techniques, tactics and teachings from my coach with my own spin on it. I definitely try to have a different relationship with my students than my coach did.”*

### *Nash's Third Moral Language*

*Table 10: Third Moral Language Construct Framework Relationship to Research Question*

<b>Research Question</b>	<b>Theory</b>	<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Attributes</b>	<b>Interview Questions</b>
How do coaches define ethics?	Nash's Moral Languages	Third Moral Language	Procedural language set within abstract, general, and principle accounts	Solution is agreed upon between professionals and client (ex. A code of ethics).	1,2,4,6,9

“The major purpose of the moral principle framework is to justify or defend an ethical decision based on a logical appeal to appropriate rules, principles, and theories” (Nash, 1996, p. 115). Nash (1996) also states that the Third Moral Language is the language of principle and “in a secular pluralist society, only a thin moral language is capable of resolving ethical dilemmas” (p. 110). Nash (1996) describes this thin moral language as procedural set within abstract, general, and principled accounts which creates the approach of ethical problem solving to be an agreement between the professionals and clients.

The Third Moral Language makes specific distinctions between act- and rule...- (Nash, 1996). A document that would be considered part of the Third Moral Language is a code of ethics. Individuals expect the code to protect them from immoral actions (Lebacqz, 1985). A code of ethics is not meant to be used as an exact ethical action guide (Nash, 1996), but best serves as a guide to what the profession wants to portray and the character of its professionals (Lebacqz, 1985).



When interviewees were asked about specific kinds of directives, rules, or procedures provided by their organizations, Interviewee C7 discussed how colleges have structured policies that coaches agree upon.

*“Coaches would be surprised in programs that still haven’t developed but particularly on the college level they actually had developed policies. It is written in black and white and you signed that you will not do this, you will not say anything negative, or you will not try to be negative.”*

Interviewees AC3 and AC4 responded to question 3, “Do you have any expectations or guidelines that your athletes are expected to/coach expected you to follow,” and provided specific examples of solutions agreed upon between coach and athlete.

*“We have a code of conduct everybody is supposed to sign at the club, outlining that we expect proper behavior, respect toward coaches, respect toward the club, respect for the sport.”*

*“My athletes sign a code of conduct. This year I’m looking it over to make sure it includes social media conduct. We’re having issues with that.”*

Interviewee C1 and C5 discussed having a program/athlete contract aimed at the specific needs of their program and having the players sign it.

*“There was a very specific player contract. And she told me I could edit that. We put that forward first as to what kind of discipline especially when you get to high school. You talk about really poor behavior whether its drinking, disrespect, grades. We put those in*

*writing and every player had to sign that. It was definitely structured at the high school level.”*

*“As a team we set up our own culture, so we set up our own rules and regulations, but we have expectations of them, as you said, that we do set up. We have a manual for our team every year. They have a final page that says, “I agree to these rules and regulations.””*

When interviewees were asked to describe a situation during their coaching/athletic career in which they had to make a difficult decision or had to resolve a difficult situation, Interviewee C2 discussed a situation where a specific major in college was ‘out of bounds’ but a solution was agreed upon between coaches.

*“We didn’t have a written rule that you couldn’t take certain majors, but there was an unwritten expectation that certain majors were out of bounds. The one he wanted to change to was out of bounds. The reason it was out of bounds was that it had 2 afternoon studios associated with it. He wanted to do industrial design. I remember my boss, my head coach saying, “Well I guess that’s the end of him being on our team.” I felt really conflicted about that. I felt like we shouldn’t kick this guy off the team because he wants to pursue a major. He’s here he should be able to take whatever major he wants. I volunteered. I said “I’ll coach him at a different time on those days. So, he’ll still practice but he’ll swim with me in the morning and that’s how we’ll make it work with the studios.” That’s what we ended up doing and certainly the conflict about it didn’t end there because I was making this special exception for this person. That same exception wasn’t necessarily being made for other people on the team.”*

When interviewees were asked besides rules and regulations, were there any other guidelines that describe what is expected of coaches, Interviewee C5 provided an example of Safe Sport and the procedural language used regarding abuse.

*“The idea of SafeSport, abuse, sexual harassment, mental abuse, physical abuse all those things that are terrible and are wrong, those are the main things they give us guidelines for. This is what they define as mental abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse all those things. They define those and give us guidelines for “If you do this, this will happen.””*

Although Question 8, “How would you define ethics,” was not specifically related to the construct, Interviewee A1 talked about their agreeance with the USSC and their coaching ethics guidelines.

*“USSC created the coaching ethics guidelines, and I agree with every word. It talks about coaches not engaging in sexual intimacies or in business partnerships with their athletes. Coaches do not exploit their athlete’s performances for their own economic being. It really lays out the boundaries.”*

### Defining Ethics

Loubert (1999) defines ethics as “the study of rules, standards and principles that dictate right conduct among members of a society. Such rules, standards and principles are based on moral values which serve as a basis for what is considered right” (p. 162). Sally Bibb compares ethics to love in the fact that everyone has an idea of what it is, but perhaps has trouble

articulating it (2008). Ethics means more than being honest and obeying rules and regulations, it means being morally virtuous (Baskin, Aronoff, & Lattimore, 1997).

Gavin (2005) discusses the inclusion of values (personal beliefs and attitudes that guide action) and morals (perspective of right and proper involving the evaluation of actions based on a broader cultural or religious standard) (p.66) and aligns with Nash's (1999) First and Second Moral Languages, which include background beliefs and community standards to identify morality. Though the use of the terms 'morals' and 'ethics' are sometimes used interchangeably, ethics refer to rules that are provided by an external source (Loubert, 1999) while morals are based on an individual's own principles of right and wrong (Gavin, 2005).

When interviewees were asked how they would define ethics, responses to this question ranged from talking about morals, ethics, both, and neither. Two of the participants (Interviewees AC5 and C3) did not directly answer the question and provided no response that had any relationship to either morals or ethics even though the attempt was made to redirect them back to the question, while Interviewee C2 asked to have the question and answer from the interview removed post transcript.

### Morals

When asked to define ethics, two of the participants used the term "morals" in the definition. While Loubert (1999) and Gavin (2005) agree that individuals use these terms interchangeably incorrectly, the use of one to define the other is expressed by Interviewee AC2.

*“Living in your morals and values. Making your decisions based on health and safety, morals and values that are honest and good for people.”*

Interviewee AC3 discussed a code of conduct which can be an example of ethics, they use it to describe an individual’s own principles.

*“I guess an honorable and moral code of conduct. Knowing the difference between right and wrong.”*

### Ethics

When asked to define ethics, five of the interviewees ( $\approx 38\%$ , 1 athlete, 1 athlete coach, and 3 coaches) used the term ethics in their responses. Interviewee A1 discussed the USSC coaching ethics guidelines as laying out ethical boundaries in their sport.

*“USSC created the coaching ethics guidelines, and I agree with every word. It talks about coaches not engaging in sexual intimacies or in business partnerships with their athletes. Coaches do not exploit their athlete’s performances for their own economic being. It really lays out the boundaries.”*

While Interviewee C4 discussed ethics being enhanced by institutional interpretation, the provided answer is describing morals.

*“I think its individual interpretation as to what is ethical in life and that is probably enhanced by how your institution you work for interprets that. It probably trickles down as a coach to what is considered ethical in your sport. There are certainly things that are*

*considered unethical. Hopefully as an athletic department or a college we are hiring people who are ethical.”*

Interviewees AC4, C1, and C7 all used the term ‘ethics’ in their replies, but provided responses that did not define ethics, but rather defined morals.

*“I guess in simplicity ethics for me is treating everyone equally. Treating everyone with respect and treating yourself with respect... I think ethics for me is about respect and it’s about feelings. I’m a feelings person. If you feel like the situation is incorrect, you’re probably most likely right that it’s incorrect.”*

*“Ethics is what you do when nobody else is watching. I’m sure stealing words from somebody else. I hate to use buzzwords like moral compass. I think that has been used nobody knows what that means. It’s lost its impact. It really means what do you do when nobody’s watching.”*

*“Ethics would be like the ability to make the hard decisions, to do what’s right. To start being able to accept differences and still being able to have an optimistic approach about what it is you’re doing. That would be my definition. I’m trying to think of somebody ethically and what did that person do.”*

### Both Ethics and Morals

When asked to define ethics, two participants responded using the terms ‘ethics’ and ‘morals’ in their replies. Interviewees AC1 and C6 attempted to define ethics and morals in their reply by comparing one to the other.

*“(Ethics are) Things that a person is bound by. (Morals are) Things that myself or other people live by.”*

*“The structure you bring to morality is determining what you ought to do. Ethics is more the structure of how you do that.”*

### Neither Ethics nor Morals

When asked to define ethics, Interviewee C5 described a situation that would be interpreted as morals but uses neither the term ‘morals’ nor ‘ethics’ in their reply.

*“I’ll just use the analogy that being able to do something-if it was printed on a newspaper you wouldn’t mind handing that newspaper to your grandparents. Being able to look yourself in the mirror after you’ve done something and agreeing that you held yourself to the best standard possible. Golden rule and all those wonderful things.”*

### Summary of Findings

The first part of this chapter outlined the findings of this study and provided evidence of emerging overarching themes. The findings section also allowed for the voices of the participants to be represented by highlighting the verbatim transcriptions of their words to verify their individual stories.

The nature of the participants for these interviews were identified as Athlete (individual that has reached a peak level of National or Olympic athlete and has experience as a coach but is not currently in a coaching position), Coach (individual has not reached a peak athletic level of National or Olympic athlete but is currently a coach in their preferred sport), or Athlete/Coach (individual has reached a peak level of National or Olympic athlete and is currently coaching in their preferred sport). The separation of the participants into these 3 categories was developed to create an understanding of potential separation of understanding, thoughts, and views of similar experiences.

Themes emerged from the responses of the participants and were included based upon the reoccurrence in the interviews and the potential to add a better understanding of the questions being answered in this research study. Responses of participants in the findings also included perspectives of athlete, athlete/coach, and coach.

Displeasure with National Governing Bodies (NGBs) emerged as a theme from the data. NGBs are the organizations, under the United States Olympic Committee, in charge of a specific sport. The participants expressed their displeasure with NGBs based on the lack of institutional control related to ethical guidelines, lack of coaching credentials, and the lack of vetting individuals who are involved in the sports they govern.



Family intervention was another theme that emerged during the interview process. This theme is described as the intervening (or lack thereof) of a family member in the athletic experience of another family members athletic experience. This theme was a concern during both the athletic experience and the coaching experience. Of those who discussed family intervention during their interviews, only one (Interviewee C7) expressed it as a positive factor. Those whom expressed family intervention as a negative factor indicated concerns about families not understanding what is in the best interest of their child(ren) to progress in sport, a level of disconnect from the environment that the child(ren) is/are subject to, or their families position on them becoming an athletic coach.

An additional theme that was present in the interviews was the physical and emotional abuse in athletics. Though all the participants that discussed this theme in their interviews expressed such happenings during their athletic careers, none mentioned themselves being abusive towards their athletes. Those who discussed this theme mentioned physical abuse as punishment for subpar performance, the use of excessive workouts as punishment, and the witnessing of physical abuse of athletes. Those who discussed this theme mentioned emotional abuse as the use of manipulation and the expression of never being good enough in the eyes of their coach.

The final theme present during the interviews was the long-term consequences on both athletes and coaches. Schermuly (2014) states that coaches have powerful social impact on their athletes and the socio-emotional anxieties in a relationship between a coach and an athlete can result in long-term negative effects. These effects were presented as concerns for the coaches' survival and the effects on their future coaching styles. All participants (100%) in this study

indicated that either their coaching style or their long-term health were affected by either a coach with whom they worked, or by whom they were coached. This included the inability to adjust to life after sports, as well as realizing there were coaches, they would not model themselves after.

### Data Analysis

*“They leave that side of the Do’s and how things get done up to the coaches. The only thing they give us guidelines for are Dont’s”. -Interviewee C5*

The following section provides an analysis of findings and gives meaning based on the research questions and constructs. Data analysis uses the research questions and the constructs as focal points.

In 1914, a young Frenchman, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, conceived the idea of the Modern Olympic Games. Coubertin believed that global sport could become a global platform for peace.

*I believe in the moral and peaceful virtues of sport. On the playing fields, men are no longer political or social fiends or enemies, but only fellow players playing the same game. (Baron Pierre Coubertin, 1914)*

Dr. LeRoy T. Walker, the first African American to be selected as Head Coach of the United States Olympic track and field team in 1976, always considered himself as an influence beyond coaching. Dr. Walker felt his responsibility as a coach went beyond the field of play. “I owe it to the young men and women that I coach to be able to leave the track program as women and men of integrity and intellect” (Friday, 1994).

Among the Olympic athletes Walker coached at North Carolina Central University was two-time hurdles gold medalist Lee Calhoun. Of the hundreds he coached, Walker said, fewer than 12 did not graduate on time...but they graduated. "That was because we had two daily

practices, and the second one was in the library," Walker said (Philip Hersh, Chicago Tribune, April 2012). The late Charles Foster, Olympian and one of Dr. LeRoy Walkers former track and field athletes at North Carolina Central University, stated that Doc's mantra was "...with hard work, you could be better than you think you are, regardless of what you had achieved or how many times people told you that you couldn't achieve something." (Philip Hersh, Chicago Tribune, April 2012).

The United States has become a powerful presence in the world of organized sports. From an early age, children can engage in organized sports leagues and develop their talent. Only a select few become good enough to become Olympians – athletes or coaches – but some athletes and coaches engage in sports for the sole purpose of reaching the pinnacle of becoming Olympians. Although National Governing Bodies (NGBs) were established to maintain a level of performance and establish rules for the field of play, the experiences of athletes and coaches as detailed in this study sometimes point to a 'win at all cost' mentality that does not always fall under the purview of NGBs, nor of ethical behavior.

#### *Research Question: How Do Coaches Define Ethics?*

##### *Nash's First Moral Language*

Nash (2002) states that the First Moral Language is centered around the background beliefs of an individual related to culture, religious, social, or family contexts. When ethics and

morals became exclusively an analytic justification, individuals would analyze moral presuppositions and potentially still not know right from wrong (Bok, 1976).

During their interview, participant AC1 provided an example of the intersection of family context and culture of sport, and is representative of the ‘metaphysical life-space’, which Barnes (1971) discusses where ethical dilemmas for their own unique meanings. This example is developed with the recollection of words spoken to them by their father and how the individuals coach made the same fundamental statements to them.

*“Even though I said some things, I recall things my father said to me growing up and I’m like “I’m never going to be like my dad.” It’s kind of like that where you hear yourself say something and it’s like “Oh yeah, my coaches used to say that to me.””*

No culture is homogenous. Within culture, it is possible to identify “subcultures”: groups of people with distinctive sets of practices and behaviors that set them apart from the larger culture and from other subcultures (De Roulet, 1976). The culture of sport being militant is discussed by participant A1 when comparing athletes to soldiers.

*“Unfortunately, we live in this crazy culture that tells athletes that they’re a bit like soldiers and that they’re supposed to do everything their coach tells them to do.”*

That same like-minded sports culture was discussed by Interviewee AC1 when talking about wanting all their athletes to work on a technique until they all did it together.

*“I’ve always wanted my swimmers to breathe every 3 on freestyle and that’s based on keeping their body balanced so I’m super vigilant about that. Making an entire group*

*start over if people aren't following that after I've given them a maximum of 3 redirections."*

Family contexts is one of the attributes used in describing Nash's First Moral Language. This attribute was found in  $\approx 15\%$  (2 of 13, both coded coaches), but participant C5 provided an example where the term 'family' is used to set a 'culture' within an athletic team.

*"We brought the whole team together and the head coach made a statement about how we are a family. "We don't condone any-we call it locker room talk-we don't condone that at all. If there is an issue with someone it must be discussed one-on-one. This will not be tolerated. We will not tolerate people making other people feel uncomfortable to be around each other. This is not what we're about. You have a problem-you don't have to like each other but you have to learn to live with each other. That is how it's going to be. You will not make your teammates feel uncomfortable or have to pick sides.""*

Sipes (1973) found that, in the United States, war and sports are positively correlated, thus disputing aggression as a driving factor in humans, and supporting it as a learned cultural behavior pattern. This learned cultural pattern in sports explains and supports the findings in that Nash's First Moral Language is not only prevalent in sport, but could be the foundation to which current coaching philosophies are developed.

### *Nash's Second Moral Language*

Nash's (2002) Second Moral Language is defined as the individual's actual ethical dilemmas and potential ethical growth. Nash (1996) recognizes the use of personal stories as essential if individuals are truly to know themselves. The attributes related to this construct are morals guided by community standards, norms, role expectations, and professional codes of conduct.

To analyze meaning of individual responses, the term community must be defined. For this dissertation, community was defined as a feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of shared common attitudes, interests, and goals (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). This definition describes a group of athletes, team, sports organization, athletic departments, or National Governing Bodies.

During the interview process, many of the participants discussed experiences they had with their coaches and how they believed that these experiences were not positive or healthy. They went on to describe how either their styles of coaching were still based on these coaches, but with their own influence, or how they did not want to be like their athletic coaches. Interviewee AC3 used the example of having a different relationship with their athletes than they did with their coach.

*"I use techniques, tactics and teachings from my coach with my own spin on it. I definitely try to have a different relationship with my students than my coach did."*

Though interviewee AC3 did not express that the techniques, tactics, and teachings of his athletic coach was wrong, the fact that he did have a good relationship with his coach, and coming to this understanding allowed for this individual to grow ethically.

Participant C7 described an experience with her coach and her choice to make a change.

*“It was definitely difficult because I recognized early on what good coaching looked like and I’m looking at my coach like “That’s not a good coach”. I was able to get out and go to another one but a lot of athletes...we just don’t have any option.”*

This quote is an example of Nash’s second language as it not only expresses an ethical dilemma and the potential ethical growth, but the role and expectations of a coach. Though this example does not provide specific detail of the issue with this coach, it provides evidence that the participant began to realize the difference between what a coach should - or should not - do.

At some point during their interviews, all of the participants discussed situations that fit this specific construct, although almost all of the examples are related to the ethical growth of their coaching style based on bad experiences they had in their athletic careers with their coaches. Some of this growth could be explained by the change in the athletic community standards and expectations, but in the manner these discussions were presented the information provided from these interviews could be attributed more to role expectations of their coaches. These expectations would lead to the development of their own coaching expectations and create organic ethical growth.



### *Nash's Third Moral Language*

Nash's Third Moral Language is defined as the procedural language set within abstract, general, and principle accounts that are agreed upon between professionals and clients (Nash, 1996). The Third Moral Language makes specific distinctions between act- and rule...- (Nash, 1996). A document that would be considered part of the Third Moral Language is a code of ethics, in which individuals expect to do things they are not designed for (Lebacqz, 1985). The agreement on procedures, present in these interviews, included documents agreed upon between coach/athlete, organization/athlete, NGB/coach, or NGB/athlete.

During his interview, participant C1 discussed the beliefs of cynicism in the reasoning for having to sign waivers in youth sports (organization/athlete and NGB/athlete) related to his family. This is an example of how such agreements cover liability of danger but not actions of people involved in the day-to-day operations of the sport.

*"I sign these horrific waivers that lacrosse is a terribly dangerous sport that can result in injury and death. And you say, "Yeah I get it." In most cases it's more of, "This is for our liability, just sign it." It doesn't explain how you see such poor behavior that people would say "Oh we can't do anything about that.""*

While participant C7 discussed the 'black and white' of these agreements signed between organizations/athlete and how the higher you go (NGB/athlete) the stricter the guidelines become.

*"It is written in black and white and you signed that you will not do this, you will not say anything negative, or you will not try to be negative. The higher you go, the more they put*

*a stronghold on what you can and cannot do and can and cannot say either directly or indirectly.”*

As technology progresses in our society, so does the inclusion of such technologies in the codes of conduct. Social media has become an issue for coaches and athletes (coach/athlete) and participant AC4 discussed how their code of conduct has been reviewed to include such media outlets.

*“My athletes sign a code of conduct. This year I’m looking it over to make sure it includes social media conduct. We’re having issues with that.”*

Participant AC4 also discussed these NGB/coach agreements related to a program developed by the United States Olympic Committee called ‘Safe Sport’.

*“Like Safe Sport-you want to make sure people are safe, where they’re not in individual situations where they can get hurt but at the same time you also don’t want to feel like you’re constantly being big bothered.”*

In this quote, participant AC4 discussed how she did not want to feel like she was being ‘big brothered,’ yet in the prior quote talks of having athletes sign a code of conduct. This creates a potential ethical blind spot that this individual does not express the same feelings toward their athlete as they do themselves.

Although most of the information provided by the participants was related to sports, Interviewee A1 discussed parameters set forth to her clients in a post athletic environment that is related to their own environment during their athletic career.

*“I’m your lawyer and here are the parameters of what I can do for you.” I have to be very clear that I’m not here for emotional support. I saw outside experts. I worked with this guy who’s really good at teaching meditation, and that was really helpful. I didn’t depend on my coach for that.”*

During the interviews, all the participants discussed situations that fit Nash’s Third Moral Language. The development of different forms of institutional control was present in many of the participants responses but few discussed their experiences as athletes that described situations related to Nash’s Third Moral Language as athletes. This information presents a change in thought over time (Nash’s Second Moral Language), or the need to protect the organization, NGB, or self from the potential of discipline, lawsuits, or unfavorable presentation.

#### *Research Question: What Are Coaches’ Perceptions of Ethical Behavior?*

##### *Ethical Blind Spots*

Ethical blind spots are biases, heuristics, and psychological traps (Tomlin et. al., 2017) that exist when people are victims of common, but flawed, or imperfect self-perception of moral attributes (Moberg, 2006). Humans tend to believe they are in control of their thoughts, while human judgement is often a result of fast, involuntary, and nearly automatic systems which rely on heuristics (Kahneman, 2011).

Justified neglect is described as people not discussing ethical breaches, because they are thinking of immediate rewards such as staying on the positive side with the powerful (Wedell-

Wedellsborg, 2019). Participant C3 discussed a situation of an athlete claiming she discriminated against them and having to coach her while the claim was being reviewed, which created the ethical blind spot.

*“I acted like nothing was wrong and I didn’t treat her any differently which was the hardest thing for me to do. All I wanted to do was not interact with her because I was like “Are you kidding me? I can’t believe I have to deal with this.” I still had to coach her. I guess I’ve grown a lot. I didn’t want to treat her badly, but I wanted to ignore her. I couldn’t because she was on my team. I don’t think it had an impact on the team at all... It made the season very difficult of having to have her still on the team after she was saying that I discriminated against her.”*

Ethical blind spots and ethical decision making can also hinder positive role modeling (Moberg, 2000). Sexual harassment and other forms of abuse have been discussed a great deal as of late. Participant AC3 provided an example of such sexual harassment but discussed the potential loss of business as the ramifications of these actions. This points to an ethical blind spot by this coach, as their concern was with their loss, and not the potential harm of the individual(s) being harassed.

*“You know fencing is filled with teenage boys. Combined with sexual harassment and stuff that’s been going on we’ve had boys who like to go around the club and pull each other’s shorts down. I said this has to stop. I said “Listen, do you want me to go out of business? This will happen. Do you want there to be a place where you fence? You think it’s funny that I can go out of business? It’s funny that I can get sued?””*

The prior quote from participant AC3 also demonstrates gender bias. Dr. Max Bazerman, Professor of Business Administration at Harvard Business School, states that ethical blind spots include having gender or race biases without the knowledge that you are partaking in such biases (Bazerman & Tenbrunsel, 2011). Gender was present in ethical blind spots of  $\approx 23\%$  of the participants (2 related to female gender, 1 related to male gender). Though two of the participants identified their gender as being an issue, participant C5 (male) presented the opposite gender (female) as being an issue.

*“When you have a large group of women in close quarters at all times, there’s going to be drama. You can’t avoid it, you can’t help it, it’s going to be there.”*

At some point during the interview process,  $\approx 92\%$  (12 of the 13 participants) presented some form of ethical blind spot. Of the 13 participants, the only individual that did not present this construct in their interview was A1 (Code: Athlete 1) who introduced the potential that coaches, or athletes that become coaches, might struggle with ethical decisions more than athletes themselves. Of the athlete/coach participants, all their identified ethical blind spots came during discussions of their coaching careers and not their athletic careers. Though the argument can be made that athletes do unethical things as well, based on the meaning of the construct, they are not blind to the ethical impact of their choices.

### *Self-Deception*

Maslow (1962) states that we deny our created reality and practice self-deception instead of being aware of our actions because, “we tend to be afraid of any knowledge that would cause us to despise ourselves or to make us feel inferior, weak worthless, evil, or shameful” (p.57).

Self-deception has been described as a discrepancy between knowing how an individual is supposed to act and how they truly act (Festinger, 1962), which includes such mechanisms as projection, displacement, and denial which lead to feedback avoiding behavior (Moss & Sanchez, 2004).

Ritov and Baron (1990) believe that these acts of personal oversight (self-deception) blur the obligation of responsibility which causes self-bias and moves the blame from self to others. This movement of blame was present when participant AC1 discussed the use of verbiage they used to blame former coaches they worked with.

*“I started off almost saying word-for-word different things that I was told as a swimmer. I was basically told the same thing with all of the coaches I had back when I swam. Like “It’s not a democracy, it’s a dictatorship.” “My way or the highway.” I’m embarrassed that I actually used those terms, but it was something--that’s what I heard my entire coaching career, all those types of things. “If you don’t like it get out.” It was addictive...”*

The experience of improper relationships between coach/athlete was discussed by two participants (both of whom are female), though self-deception was only presented by one participant. The belief that abuse would happen to an individual no matter the environment or situation, is presented in participant AC1s interview when discussing the abuse endured, but chose to move in with their coach anyway.

*“I probably would never have lived with my coach because that would have been problematic. But that doesn’t mean he wouldn’t have found a way to abuse me. I already*

*knew he was screwing somebody on my team when I moved in with him. It would make it more difficult for things, but I think things would have happened anyways.”*

Not all participants believed that experiences between a coach and athlete were bad. Participant AC2, who identified as female, discussed traveling with her male coaches as an adolescent and not feeling uncomfortable.

*“Both of my coaches were very much that way, they could take us on trips and they never made me feel uncomfortable. I never felt I was going to be physically molested or sexually abused. It never crossed a line of pure respect for each other.”*

Though these experiences are quite different in nature, they are both examples of the disconnect youth athletes have of unethical situations and how they create self-deception to justify the actions.

Current solutions related to unethical behaviors in organizations, such as ethics training, fail to consider the important role of the enabler and therefore will be inhibited in their potential, generating only limited effectiveness (Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004). When participants were asked if they believed teaching ethics in the coaching field would create change, 12 of the 13 participants stated they believed it would be effective. Though making the statement that teaching ethics would be effective, participant C7 questioned her own response in a manner to present the deception of her true belief. This example from the interview shows that self-deception is evident even in the belief that change is possible.

*“I think it would definitely help. I don’t know if it would make a change but at least it would be putting forth more effort to get the word out and to get a fair image of what it*

*looks like and what it could look like. Now it's a very different platform and I don't think ethics are in the top tier of things they are considering. Sometimes it's a forced thing, but generally I don't think it could hurt. It could help even if it only helps one."*

Based on the participants responses during the interviews, there is ample data to support the statement that self-deception is prevalent in sports (from the athlete and coaching perspective).

### *Language Euphemisms*

Language euphemisms are disguised stories an individual tells themselves to make unethical conduct reputable and is a harmful weapon (Bandura, 1999). These disguised stories can put others in danger as participant C6 discussed his displeasure with an athletic department for 'micromanaging' when a health situation placed one of the athletes in danger.

*"One of our athletes had an eating disorder and we didn't really see it. In the end we brought her to our trainers and our athletic trainers caused our athlete to quit the team, which we weren't happy about... It's led me to step up on how I'm going to protect my athletes from--when the problems come from the department whether it's the trainers or administrators down towards us they like to micromanage. They're distant but they try to manage what goes on with the team."*

Individuals use language euphemisms to diminish others, or their own pain and to avoid placing responsibility for hurting others, or themselves, where it belongs (Bolinger, 2014). Of the participants that used language euphemisms during their interviews, two used them to justify the



abusive actions of their coaches. Participant AC4 discussed the physical abuse endured as a teenage athlete and used euphemism to justify this abuse as a mechanism of success.

*“He would hit us with the weapon if we didn’t do something. If we didn’t do something immediately, he would go into a rage and hit us with his weapon. I was cut along my arms and legs. I would wear long pants and long sleeves in the summertime because I didn’t want people to ask me questions about my arms and legs. If you want to make an athlete good really fast at a really young age, you treat them like that.”*

Participant AC4 also discussed emotional and behavioral instability in athletes using the justification of being in a one-on-one combat sport.

*“Those types of situations do come up and a lot of time it’s just behavioral. Emotional and behavioral instability. I had another situation that I actually handles well where a kid was very hard on himself and he punched a hole in the wall. He was so angry. We’re in a combat sport and you’re one on one so a lot of these emotions come up very readily.”*

Though only  $\approx 23\%$  (3 of 13 participants, 2 females, 1 male) of the participants used language euphemisms to cover unethical and immoral actions, their use to justify either abusive actions or selfish acts was alarming. Albert Speer (1970), a member of the Nazi Germany government and Hitler’s innermost circle of advisors, discussed how during the design of the munitions factories he was very knowledgeable of the handling of the prisoners, but by relabeling himself as an ‘architect’ or ‘administrator’, was able to convince himself that worrying about these individuals was not his job. The defense of violently abusive actions by participants

AC2 and AC4 coaches and participant AC4's justification of their athlete acting out in a violent manner are evidence of language euphemisms being used as a defense mechanism to deny the severity of their specific situations.

### Defining Ethics

Loubert (1999) defines ethics as “the study of rules, standards and principles that dictate right conduct among members of a society. Such rules, standards and principles are based on moral values which serve as a basis for what is considered right” (p. 162). Though the use of the terms ‘morals’ and ‘ethics’ are sometimes used interchangeably, ethics refer to rules that are provided by an external source (Loubert, 1999) while morals are based on an individual's own principles of right and wrong (Gavin, 2005).

Gavin (2005) discussed the inclusion of values and morals in an individual's decision making (p.66). This aligns with Nash's (1999) First and Second Moral Languages, which include background beliefs and community standards to identify morality.

If children learn morals based on the teachings and actions of their surroundings (Damon, 1999), it must be considered that athletes and coaches learn morals from those who coach them but are never taught ethics. Participant C5 discussed the ‘Golden Rule’ and their grandparents reading about their actions.

*“If it was printed on a newspaper you wouldn't mind handing that newspaper to your grandparents. Golden rule and all those wonderful things.”*

During the interview process, participants were asked if they believed teaching ethics in athletic programs would change coaches' ethical beliefs. Of the thirteen participants,  $\approx 46\%$  (6) of the participants believe that it would make a change in coaches' beliefs while  $\approx 46\%$  (6) were undecided. One participant noted that it would not make change. Participant C2, who is undecided in their answer and asked to have their answer removed from the question pertaining to ethics, believed that coaches would still do as they pleased due to being subjected to 'plenty of rules'.

*"I have a part of me that thinks so and part of me that doesn't. But I do think that there will be people who hear about ethics and get that sort of education, but they will continue to do as they please because they have already sort of accepted themselves to plenty of rules. So why wouldn't these other rules not also really apply to them?"*

Participant C2 also stated that there was a level of ignorance in understanding ethics.

*"Part of me says of course because there's quite a bit of ignorance around it and to the extent that we can do something about ignorance of ethics I think we will improve it."*

The ignorance discussed by participant C2 explained the difficulty coaches in defining ethics. Of the ten participants who answered the question in which they were directly asked to define ethics, none of the participants coded as athlete/coach or coach, provided responses that were related to the definition of ethics. Only participant A1 replied with an answer that was based on the definition of ethics.

*"USSC created the coaching ethics guidelines, and I agree with every word. It talks about coaches not engaging in sexual intimacies or in business partnerships with their*

*athletes. Coaches do not exploit their athlete's performances for their own economic being. It really lays out the boundaries."*

### Summary of Analysis

The analysis of findings used the constructs of Nash's Three Moral Languages to provide meaning to the research questions that guided the study and asked participants' perceptions of ethical behavior, and how they defined ethics.

Nash's First Moral Language focuses on an individual's beliefs related to culture, religion, social, and family context (Nash, 2002). The participants discussed situations that infiltrate the culture of sport being the zero-level of beliefs for the participants. The use of terms and language that discusses a military type atmosphere in their coaching is also produced in what the participants found to be a family type atmosphere. The use of terms like soldiers and family develop a true understanding of how coaches believe the culture of sport should be, but not ethically what is correct.

Nash's Second Moral Language involves actual ethical dilemmas of individuals and their potential ethical growth. Though all of the participants during their interviews discussed some form of 'code of ethics' within their organizations/NGBs, the prevalent ethical dilemma present in the data was the discussion of past relationships with the participants coaches when they were athletes. Though other ethical dilemmas were present in the participants data, none of these answered the research question of how coaches define ethics. Every participant that was

interviewed provided examples that were related to this specific construct, but every participant that identified the past relationship with an athletic coach also provided data that indicates ethical growth. These indications suggest that coaches that perceive themselves to have had ethical dilemmas might use those experiences to become more ethical, or at minimum to not make the same unethical decisions.

Nash's Third Moral Language used procedural language that is agreed upon between professionals and clients (Nash, 1996). All the individuals that participated at some point during their interviews discuss such agreements but express pessimisms towards their effectiveness. All seven of the participants coded as coaches, and four of the five coded as athlete/coach express that the use of such agreements (in some form) represents a form of control and might be overbearing. The feeling towards these documents (both for the oversight of their conduct and the oversight of their athletes conduct) was expressed using verbal tones that leads to the belief these are a bother to these individuals. These factors expressed by the participants, and interpreted using Nash's Third Moral Language, allow the assumption to be made that coaches do not understand the importance of ethical guidelines and documentations, or believe themselves to be ethical in nature without such guiding documents.

Ethical blind spots are biases, heuristics, and psychological traps (Tomlin et al., 2017) that exist when people are victims of common, but flawed or imperfect self-perception of moral attributes (Moberg, 2006). Ethical Blind Spots were represented by 12 of the 13 participants ( $\approx 92\%$ ) and included such subject areas as discrimination, sexual harassment, and gender bias. The only participant that did not present indications of ethical blind spots was coded as athlete, which expresses that all individuals coded as coach or athlete/coach suffer from some form of

ethical blinding. These findings do not limit fault to athletes being unethical, but support the fact that those who are coaches, or when entering the coaching field post athletic career, may struggle with understanding what represents acceptable ethical behavior.

Self-deception is described as the difference between knowing how an individual is supposed to act and how they truly act (Festinger, 1962). Evidence of self-deception by the participants was prevalent when asked if teaching ethics to coaches would be effective in creating change. Though  $\approx 92\%$  of the participants stated they believed it would help provide a better understanding of ethics to coaches, some indicated in their vocal tones and response times that they may not actually believe their own responses to be true with one of the participants actually questioning their own answer while answering the question. If the individuals that participated in these interviews have indications of self-deception in their responses, it is likely that those who run the organizations governing the action of these coaches suffer from the same self-deception tendencies. The responses provided by the participants indicate that perception of ethics, in relation to self-deception is limited at best.

Language euphemisms was the least exemplified construct under the theory of self-perception at only  $\approx 23\%$  (3 of 13 participants). The argument can be made that these participants did discuss some of the more vile acts of abuse (sexual and physical), though it is encouraging that so few of the participants (all of whom discussed unethical issues in their interviews) tried to disguise the severity of these actions. One participant (AC4), who is coded as an athlete/coach, used language euphemisms in not only discussing the actions of their coach as an athlete, but their actions as a coach, which indicates the possibility that such actions are potentially learned and carried over while transitioning careers. The responses of the participants indicate that

language euphemisms are limited in coaches as it relates to their perception of ethics, but might be the indicator of abuse carrying over from their time as an athlete to their coaching careers.

Loubert (1999) defines ethics as “the study of rules, standards and principles that dictate right conduct among members of a society. Ethics means more than being honest and obeying rules and regulations, it means being morally virtuous (Baskin, Aronoff, & Lattimore, 1997). To be ‘morally virtuous’, one must first understand what ethics truly means. The participants in this study were asked to define ethics during their interviews. Of those who provided data in the attempt to define ethics, only one participant provided an answer that was in line with the definition of ethics. All the participants coded as coach or athlete/coach were unable to define ethics. Participants used definitions that pertained to morals and did include a response that related to neither ethics nor morals.

When interviewees were asked what they believe the duties and responsibilities of a coach are, all participants expressed the responsibility to provide an understanding of rules and techniques to play their chosen coached sport and the need to help their athletes become better outside of sport. There was no indication, within the direct answers to this question, that self-deception was present. External data from other questions asked of the interviewees provided information that would question their true compliance to their answer. The perception of how they act compared to the perception of how others would view their actions, which they provided, not only classifies as self-deception but strongly supports the issue of self-perception in coaches.

## CHAPTER FIVE

This phenomenological study was designed to explore the self-perception of ethical behavior in athletes and coaches. Thirteen individual interviews were conducted which yielded four themes regarding the athletic and/or coaching experiences of the participants in relationship to their ethical views, beliefs, and experiences. The qualitative study gathered first-person perspectives and explored the experiences of high achieving athletes and coaches. The emerging themes captured the spirit of their stories.

Two research questions guided this research study. Question one was analyzed using the constructs of the theory of self-perception. Question two was analyzed using the constructs of Nash's Moral Languages.

1. Question: What are coaches' perceptions of ethical behavior?
  - a. Theory: Self-Perception
    - i. Construct #1: Ethical Blind Spots
    - ii. Construct #2: Self-Deception
    - iii. Construct #3: Language Euphemisms
2. Question: How do coaches define ethics?
  - a. Nash's Three Moral Languages
    - i. Construct #1: Nash's First Moral Language (Zero-Level of Beliefs)
    - ii. Construct #2: Nash's Second Moral Language (Ethical dilemmas and potential ethical growth)



iii. Construct #3: Nash's Third Moral Language (Procedural language within abstract, general, and principle accounts)

This study found that both the athletic experiences and coaching experiences of the participants impacted the ethical foundation of these individuals. The emerging themes for this study included: Displeasure with National Governing Bodies (NGBs), Family Intervention, Physical and Emotional Abuse, and Long-Term Consequences. In this chapter, I discuss how the conceptual framework of the study brought meaning to the findings, the future implications of the study, and recommendations for those who are involved in all aspects of athletic.

Discussion of Findings and Results

Historically, literature regarding athletes and coaches with regards to ethical issues and situations has focused on the effects on the individuals involved but not the foundation of belief or what causes their individual beliefs. Tomlin et. al. (2017) classifies Fundamental Attribute Error (FAE) as the self-perception bias where individuals attribute others' behaviors to internal characteristics and temperaments but attribute their own behavior to environmental influences. The area of self-perception is not easily studied in part because the nature of the research is neither fully developed nor tested and such self-perception in individuals is null in nature (Eva & Regehr, 2005).

Given the focus on the effects that abusive and unethical situations have at all levels of athletics, and to all individuals involved, the present study aimed to focus on the realization that those who are unethical have reasons for their actions. Although the domains of ethics are well

defined, Eva, et al. (2004) found that poor correlation between self-perception and external perception of ethics still existed.

The United States Olympic Committee (USOC) governs over 47 different National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and 25 Paralympic NGBs which include all current summer and winter Olympic/Paralympic sports (United States Olympic Committee, 2017). National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sports are designed to oversee all aspects of the sports they govern. Those in control of these NGBs are adults who have their own set of interests and internal visualization of who they are and how they act. They design rules that each coach and athlete is supposed to follow inside the sport as well as outside the sport.

### Olympism

*“Becoming an Olympic athlete – an Olympian – is the greatest achievement of athletics in any sport. In Ancient Greece, the Olympics became one of the world’s most enduring and hallowed institutions celebrated between the Greeks and Romans beginning in 776 B.C. However, in 393 A.D. The Roman Emperor, Theodosius, declared the Olympic Games corrupt and ‘pagan,’ and put an end to them.”-Program of the Opening Ceremonies of the 1996 Centennial Games*

It is essential to discuss the participants who have reached the level of Olympian as either athlete, coach, or both, as well as the topic of Olympism. The International Olympic Committee defines Olympism as, “A philosophy of life, exalting and combining in a balanced whole the

qualities of body, will and mind. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy found in effort, the educational value of good example and respect for universal fundamental ethical principles.” (International Olympic Committee, 2019, p.11). This universal philosophy, by definition, is applicable to everyone, regardless of nation of origin, race, gender, social class, religion, or ideology – an idea of Olympism which identifies a variety of values to which a nation can genuinely commit itself (Parry, 2003).

Even though the ideals of the International Olympic Committee are included in the Olympic Charter, the committee continues to struggle with the regulation of such issues as simple as identifying gender in written language. The Olympic Charter states, “the masculine gender used in relation to any physical person (for example, names such as president, vice-president, chairman, member, leader, official, chef de mission, participant, competitor, athlete, judge, referee, member of a jury, attaché, candidate or personnel, or pronouns such as he, they or them) shall, unless there is a specific provision to the contrary, be understood as including the feminine gender” (International Olympic Committee, 2019, p.9).

### Issues in K-12 Athletics

*"Why should we have to go to class if we come here to play FOOTBALL, we ain't come to play SCHOOL, classes are POINTLESS." -Cardale Jones, Former Ohio State University Quarterback*

Children are identified as potential high-level/future Olympic athletes beginning at an exceedingly early age. As early as age 6, sports competitions and competitive level training begins. The number of children participating in organized competitive sport increases linearly peaking between 11 and 13 years of age while steadily declining after age 13 (Maffulli, 2000).

Studies conducted by Marsh (1992), Neish (1993), Klesse (1994), McCarthy (2000), Branch (2003), VanDuyne (2004), and Lumpkin & Favor (2012) concluded that the participation in extracurricular activities in high school aged students was linked to higher GPA's, test scores, and graduation rates. Maffulli (2000) points out that until the late 2000's, research conducted relating education to athletics included all extracurricular activity which included other forms of group activities outside of athletics that show greater academic success. Therefore, the idea that playing sports improves academic performance may not be fully accurate.

Findings from relevant studies in the United States suggest that an average of 18 hours of intensive training per week is standard for athletes between 11 and 14 years of age (Maffulli, 2000). This high level of competitive training starts the clock on the potential for forms of trauma and abuse, and empirical evidence suggests early childhood trauma, and emotional traumatic experiences (e.g., excessive criticism or rejection) may give rise to a self-critical personality style (Kempke et. al., 2014).

Dr. Jeff Duke (2014) noted that the win percentages of coaches that coach with love compared to those that coach with fear is practically identical. It is the basic comparison of Nick Saban (University of Alabama) versus Les Miles (Louisiana State University); From the visual aspect of these two coaches, one presents a fear and the other a more positive and nurturing

atmosphere during their game time coaching (Denenea, 2011). But at what point does such fear become trauma?

Author and Historian Peter Sterns states that in the 1960's, the growing frenzy over college entrance into certain schools to which parents believed their children were entitled, created an atmosphere of competitive frenzy (Sterns, 2004). This parental anxiety changed the environment of sport not only in the K-12 environment.

Lumpkin & Favor (2012) found that not only did male non-athletes score higher on the ACT, but it was the opposite for female non-athletes though the graduation rates for athletes was significantly higher than non-athletes (97.6% of athletes graduate versus 88.1% of non-athletes). These findings could indicate a shift in thinking that female athletes need to perform at a higher educational level than males to be accepted into university academic programs and continue their athletic careers. Further, sports in the American education system could be viewed as more for the entertainment of adults, rather than to create an environment of growth for the children who participate. John O'Sullivan writes, "I find it sad that we trade in the health and safety of our kids for the adult need to be entertained and get a return on our investment, yet that is exactly what we do" (O'Sullivan, 2015, n.p.).

### *The European Model of K-12 Sports*

The sports model in the K-12 age groups is much different in Europe than in the United States. Europe has adopted the model of voluntary club sports and associations while

historically, in the United States, sports are a staple of the K-12 education system (von Bottenburg, 2011). The creation of clubs was an expression of the right of individuals to associate freely without the interference or oversight of the state (Szymanski, 2008). Wilson (1994) states that European schools devote themselves mainly to the focus of education while private clubs allow students to turn their backs on education and participate in sports at all levels.

Von Bottenburg (2011) points out that while the American system of linking sports to education became more elitist oriented, the European model was more directed at sports for all. The American model became highly competitive and achievement oriented (Stokvis, 2009) and created an environment modeled after professional or elite-level programs with the emphasis on winning in the high-profile sports (Slack & Parent, 2008). Although the European model still allows for high-level athletic preparation, the disconnect prevents interference in the education format (Girginov & Sandanski, 2004).

Sean Smith, Professor of Communications at Royal Roads University states that, "Clubs in Europe are provincial clubs as much as they are sporting clubs – there's the high-level club, and all these age-group brackets playing under the same social club. In North America, 'club' for the most part ends in high school – it's the last rung on the ladder of high performance." (Loh, 2019, n.p.)

### Colleges and Universities

Colleges and Universities are bound to meet the standards for gender equality based on the guidelines set by Title IX. The Champion Women Organization (2020) conducted an in-depth analysis on this matter and found that 90% of college and university intercollegiate athletic departments are not meeting any of the standards set by Title IX to demonstrate equality in sports opportunities. This type of inequality would harbor the development of gender bias in sports as found in this study. The potential for both men and women to project and promote gender bias in their actions or discussions was identified under the construct ethical blind spots, and based on the analysis of Champion Women, it is potentially a learned trait.

### The Culture of Sports

A team culture is expressed as its values, attitudes, and beliefs about sport and determines if the teams focus is fun, mastery, or winning, and if it promotes individual or team goals (Taylor, 2013). The culture that surrounds sport can also develop into a family type environment with like-minded thought (zero-level of beliefs as in Nash's First Moral Language). To develop an understanding of how Nash's First Moral Language fits into the context of sport, one must accept that sport is a culture unto itself.

To paraphrase Heraclitus, the culture we communicate today will not be the same we communicated yesterday, though that perception will be in our eyes. Culture in modern societies is a site of struggle and debate over identity, belonging, validity, and privilege (Buldioski, 2002). Habits such as showing feverish support for a football team may be important to some and seem foolish to others, but it is the way we look at others that imprisons them within their own

loyalties (Maalouf, 2001). This imprisonment could lead to the acceptance of actions that may normally be considered unethical.

The recognition of unethical behavior in sports is key to change such a culture. A major step in repairing the ‘win at all cost’ culture in youth sports is recognizing where the negative behavior is introduced, often by the adults that are affiliated with the sport and not by the youth participants (Taygart, 2017). Such behavior by these adults in youth sports has the potential to continually impact the culture of sports.

### Recommendations

#### *Recommendation: The Athlete*

For athletes, high-achieving or otherwise, this study provided a perspective into not only what allowed these individuals to achieve their athletic and coaching goals, but also a view into the issues they faced related to abuse and experiencing unethical situations. The participants also, by answering the questions related to this study, provided a narrative for what they do and do not know about ethics. Based on the findings of this study, it would be the suggestion of this researcher to begin teaching ethics in sports as part of the athletic experience beginning in K-12.

For the athletes who are currently participating in athletics at all levels, it is particularly important that they understand their rights as an athlete. The power of athletics is in their hands because without athletes, there is no sport. This study provided a viewpoint from not only National/Olympic athletes, but also athletes that became coaches, those who did not reach National/Olympic status, and those who became high level coaches. Participants shared their



experiences, both good and bad, and by doing so allowed other athletes to learn from their experiences. Understanding ethics is important to both athletics and coaches.

### *Recommendation: The Coach*

For coaches, their beliefs of what is acceptable behavior of athlete and coach is apparent to others on the field of play. However, their own self-perception of what is acceptable might be completely different. The findings show that the ability for athletic coaches to understand if they are acting in an ethical or unethical manner seems difficult to determine if they do not understand what ethics means, nor what it looks like in action. The ability to act ethically is dependent on coaches connecting their own actions to decisions that would be considered ethical according to the rules or guidelines of their sport.

Findings of this study also show that for coaches to understand how to act ethically, they must reflect on how they were treated as athletes, regardless of at what level they competed. The possibility that these coaches acted based on learned traits and used language euphemisms to mask destructive behavior, supports that potential for Stockholm Syndrome in athletics is valid: A complex reaction to a frightening situation where the hostage (i.e. athlete) bonds with, identifies with, or sympathizes with his or her captor (i.e. coach) (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.).

This study also provided an outline for what needs to be viewed as an opportunity for personal and professional growth, described ethical or unethical situations in which coaches may

find themselves. Though this is not a complete guide to change, it outlines potential internal issues that could challenge coaches.

*Recommendation: National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and the United States Olympic Committee (USOC)*

The United States Olympic Committee (USOC) governs over 47 different National Governing Bodies (NGB) and 25 Paralympic NGB which include all current summer and winter Olympic/Paralympic sports (United States Olympic Committee, 2017). The USOC is run in the manner of a pyramid structured business where they are the governing body for all NGBs, though this does not mean they have influence over these organizations.

Individuals selected to oversee the NGBs and athletic organizations are adults who have their own perceptions of how these organizations should run. Coaches must justify their involvement with the NGBs and often must relate their professional futures to successful results (David, 2005). In the case of USA gymnastics as an NGB, their decision to not protect their athletes from an unethical situation not only had a detrimental impact on the sport, but also could impact the safety and development of youth who participated.

Based on the findings of this study, and the direct statements from the participants, there is a large gap between how the athletes and coaches see these organizations and how the NGBs portray themselves. None of the participants had a positive word to say regarding their organization nor the NGBs to the extent that one participant (AC4) stated they do not rely on

their NGB for anything. This disconnect is harmful to not only the health and wellbeing of the athletes, but also athletics itself. The fact that every athletic organization, NGB, and the USOC have some form of a code of ethics, yet no participant coded athlete/coach or coach in this study clearly defined ethics. Findings suggest that this might be a significant issue for the safety and growth of the athletes.

### Implications for the Future

#### *Stockholm Syndrome*

The coach-athlete relationship is potentially one of the most influential relationships in the athletes' lives (Gervin & Dunn, 2004). Joan Ryan states that coaches of elite sports can influence the athlete more than their parents or teachers at school (O'Rielly, 2012). Stockholm Syndrome is considered a complex reaction to a situation where the hostage bonds with, identifies with, or sympathizes with his or her captor (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, n.d.). The term is used to describe a condition that progresses between an aggressor and the victims in circumstances such as hostage negotiations, kidnapping, and abuse (Auerback, Kiesler, Strentz, Schmidt, & Serio, 1994). In the case of the coach-athlete relationship, the athlete (hostage) will begin to sympathize with the coach (captor) and lead to the athlete potentially coaching in the manner of the coach which could perpetuate the development of future coach bullies.

The data collected in this study indicated the effects of potential Stockholm Syndrome in the athletic environment. Such indicators need to be researched further, and on a larger scale to

understand the potential impact Stockholm Syndrome is having on not only the individuals suffering, but also those they encounter.

### *Implication on Athletes Transition into Life After Sport*

At some point in athletes' careers, they will transition into a life without sports participation. The argument has been made that those who participate in athletics in high school are provided special considerations to pass which has been found true in special cases. Though this point would suggest that these individuals will struggle post high school, the graduation rates of those who participated in high school sports in Kansas during the 2008-2009 school year is higher than those who did not (97.6% athletes, 88.1% non-athlete) (Krings, 2014).

As athlete's transition into college athletics, the scholarships that are offered and awarded can become a factor in the amount of abuse the athlete is willing to endure as well as the amount of abuse the coach feels justified in offering (Herbertson, 2013). Though education is a factor in quality of life post athletics, this and other research studies suggest, abuse of athletes can cause mental, physical, and emotional issues as these individuals' transition into life post athletics. Constitutional bylaws in college athletics fail the victim because there are no 'clearly established' rules to protect those that choose to speak out against their coaches or other athletes, and no priority right of their scholarship being renewed (Hermendorfer, 2014).

### *Researchers Reflections*

I undertook this research study initially for selfish reasons and what it became was so much bigger than myself. As a survivor of emotional abuse, and family that have been abused as athletes, this was the most difficult project in which I have ever been involved. I cannot begin to

explain the number of tears I have cried reading stories or talking with people from all walks of life, not just athletes, that have been or still suffer from all kinds of abuse. Their stories and struggles are what became my driving force.

The knowledge of athletics I have obtained throughout my lifetime was always a bit jaded. I never wanted to believe that what I endured could possibly be widespread and that lead me to suffer from my own ethical blind spots, self-deceptions, language euphemisms, and all different types of ethical dilemmas. Until seven years ago (when I returned to school), I did not realize they existed. I was one of those mentally abusive coaches, but this study has made me realize why I did what I did. I learned from abusive coaches and I continued the pattern of abuse: Stockholm Syndrome. Most of these individuals were extraordinarily successful athletes, but the damage I may have caused them will haunt me for the rest of my life. To them all, I am profoundly grateful for your trust in me and regret my actions.

Along the journey, this study was met with mixed feedback. Though it took some time for people to really understand the enormous impact this study may have on athletics, and multiple other studies to support some of the ideas this paper presents, the positive feedback I received during this study was overwhelming. The negative feedback never once had anything to do with the study not being appropriate, or the ideas false, but it made individuals take a good look at themselves and I believe it scared them.

Taking time to reflect on this study, it was never easy. Incredibly early mornings and long hours, as well as a point where I had to take a break because the information I was receiving, and reading was just so mentally overwhelming that it was damaging me personally.

Upon reflection, giving a voice to some and meaning to others, empowered me to be thorough in approaching this project.

This study is just the beginning, I hope, of true change where maybe not in my lifetime, but the next generation will not have to endure the same abuse that others did. The story of abuse in athletics is just beginning, sad to say, but true change takes knowledge; knowledge of one's self being, of listening to others when sharing stories, and the real understanding that no matter who you are, where you're from, economic background, color, gender identification, or sexual orientation we are all in this together.

#### I Used to Think... but Now I Think

I used to think that coaches were more apt to ignore the rule of ethics in relation to their sport and athlete. Upon finishing this study, I now think that these same coaches really do not know what ethical actions are and may not be completely at fault for their violations. This is not to say that a lack of morals is not to blame for some of the unethical actions, but how can one be expected to follow something they do not even define or understand.

I used to think that the United States Olympic Committee and the National Governing Bodies issuing a Code of Ethics was a good start to curbing the unethical actions of coaches in their sports. I now believe that this is not even the starting point needed to make change. It does not matter what a Code of Ethics outlines if those inside the organization do not know what ethics even is. The starting point must be education, and not just for the coaches but the athletes as they begin sports. It takes many generations to make change. By starting ethical education in

youth sports, those youth athletes become coaches and will already have a moral and ethical foundation.

I used to think that coaches who acted in unethical ways were isolated only to those coaches whose actions were blatantly obvious. After conducting the interviews for this study, I now know that these unethical actions are more prevalent than I originally thought. It is my belief this is because some of these actions are so isolated that people, including the coaches who are acting in the unethical manner, may not even recognize they are happening. Some National Governing Bodies (NGB's) have millions of athletes in their sports. Without a huge undertaking of change, these isolated incidents may never even be noticed by these organizations, which allows them to continue.

**APPENDIX A**  
**2016 SUMMER OLYMPIC MEDAL COUNT PER CAPITA**



Rank	Country	Medals	Population	Population per Medal
1	Grenada	1	106,825	106,825
2	Bahamas	2	388,019	194,009
3	Jamaica	11	2,725,941	247,812
4	New Zealand	18	4,595,700	255,316
5	Denmark	15	5,676,002	378,400
6	Croatia	10	4,224,404	422,440
7	Slovenia	4	2,063,768	515,942
8	Georgia	7	3,679,000	525,571
9	Azerbaijan	18	9,651,349	536,186
10	Hungary	15	9,844,686	656,312
11	Bahrain	2	1,377,237	688,618
12	Lithuania	4	2,910,199	727,549
13	Armenia	4	3,017,712	754,428
14	Australia	29	23,781,169	820,040
15	Serbia	8	7,098,247	887,280
16	Sweden	11	9,798,871	890,806
17	Netherlands	19	16,936,520	891,395
18	Fiji	1	892,145	892,145
19	Great Britain	67	65,138,232	972,212
20	Kazakhstan	17	17,544,126	1,032,007
21	Cuba	11	11,389,562	1,035,414
22	Czech Republic	10	10,551,219	1,055,121
23	Belarus	9	9,513,000	1,057,000
24	Switzerland	7	8,286,976	1,183,853
25	Norway	4	5,195,921	1,298,980
26	Estonia	1	1,311,998	1,311,998
27	Slovakia	4	5,424,050	1,356,012
28	Trinidad and Tobago	1	1,360,088	1,360,088
29	Mongolia	2	2,959,134	1,479,567
30	France	42	66,808,385	1,590,675
31	Canada	22	35,851,774	1,629,626
32	Greece	6	10,823,732	1,803,955
33	Kosovo	1	1,859,203	1,859,203
34	Belgium	6	11,285,721	1,880,953
35	Germany	42	81,413,145	1,938,408
36	Italy	28	60,802,085	2,171,503
37	Qatar	1	2,235,355	2,235,355
38	Ireland	2	4,640,703	2,320,351
39	Bulgaria	3	7,177,991	2,392,663
40	Uzbekistan	13	31,299,500	2,407,653
41	South Korea	21	50,617,045	2,410,335

42	Russian Federation	56	144,096,812	2,573,157
43	United States	121	321,418,820	2,656,353
44	Spain	17	46,418,269	2,730,486
45	Japan	41	126,958,472	3,096,548
46	Poland	11	37,999,494	3,454,499
47	Puerto Rico	1	3,474,182	3,474,182
48	Kenya	13	46,050,302	3,542,330
49	Moldova	1	3,554,150	3,554,150
50	North Korea	7	25,155,317	3,593,616
51	Tunisia	3	11,107,800	3,702,600
52	Romania	5	19,832,389	3,966,477
53	Ukraine	11	45,198,200	4,108,927
54	Israel	2	8,380,400	4,190,200
55	Finland	1	5,482,013	5,482,013
56	South Africa	10	54,956,920	5,495,692
57	Singapore	1	5,535,002	5,535,002
58	Colombia	8	48,228,704	6,028,588
59	Malaysia	5	30,331,007	6,066,201
60	Jordan	1	7,594,547	7,594,547
61	Taiwan	3	23,510,000	7,836,666
62	Tajikistan	1	8,481,855	8,481,855
63	Austria	1	8,611,088	8,611,088
64	United Arab Emirates	1	9,156,963	9,156,963
65	Turkey	8	78,665,830	9,833,228
66	Iran	8	79,109,272	9,888,659
67	Portugal	1	10,348,648	10,348,648
68	Venezuela	3	31,108,083	10,369,361
69	Dominican Republic	1	10,528,391	10,528,391
70	Argentina	4	43,416,755	10,854,188
71	Brazil	19	207,847,528	10,939,343
72	Burundi	1	11,178,921	11,178,921
73	Thailand	6	67,959,359	11,326,559
74	Côte d'Ivoire	2	22,701,556	11,350,778
75	Ethiopia	8	99,390,750	12,423,843
76	China	70	1,371,220,000	19,588,857
77	Algeria	2	39,666,519	19,833,259
78	Niger	1	19,899,120	19,899,120
79	Mexico	5	127,017,224	25,403,444
80	Egypt	3	91,508,084	30,502,694
81	Morocco	1	34,377,511	34,377,511
82	Vietnam	2	91,703,800	45,851,900
83	Indonesia	3	257,563,815	85,854,605
84	Philippines	1	100,699,395	100,699,395
85	Nigeria	1	182,201,962	182,201,962
86	India	2	1,311,050,527	655,525,263

**APPENDIX B**  
**IRB APPROVAL**



University of Central Florida Institutional Review Board  
Office of Research & Commercialization  
12201 Research Parkway, Suite 501  
Orlando, Florida 32826-3246  
Telephone: 407-823-2901 or 407-882-2276  
[www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html](http://www.research.ucf.edu/compliance/irb.html)

### Determination of Exempt Human Research

From: **UCF Institutional Review Board #1**  
**FWA00000351, IRB00001138**

To: **Charles Bachand**

Date: **April 06, 2018**

Dear Researcher:

On 04/06/2018, the IRB reviewed the following activity as human participant research that is exempt from regulation:

Type of Review: Exempt Determination  
Project Title: The Ethical Conundrum in Athletic Coaching: Issues and Effects Related to Athlete Bullying  
Investigator: Charles Bachand  
IRB Number: SBE-18-13833  
Funding Agency:  
Grant Title:  
Research ID: N/A

This determination applies only to the activities described in the IRB submission and does not apply should any changes be made. If changes are made and there are questions about whether these changes affect the exempt status of the human research, please contact the IRB. When you have completed your research, please submit a Study Closure request in iRIS so that IRB records will be accurate.

In the conduct of this research, you are responsible to follow the requirements of the Investigator Manual.

This letter is signed by:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gillian Morien'.

Signature applied by Gillian Morien on 04/06/2018 02:21:05 PM EDT

Designated Reviewer

**APPENDIX C**  
**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR DISSERTATION RESEARCH**

1. Could you provide a brief overview of your experience as a coach/athlete?
2. What kinds of directives, rules, or procedures does your organization provide?
3. Do you have any expectations or guidelines that your athletes are expected to/coach expected you to follow?
4. Have you ever experienced a situation during your coaching/athletic career in which you had to make a difficult decision or had to resolve a difficult situation?
  - a. Could you describe how you handled the situation and why you handled in the way you did?
  - b. What was the impact of your decision?
5. What do you believe the duties and responsibilities of a coach are?
6. Besides rules and regulations, are there any other guidelines that describe what is expected of coaches?
7. Do you model yourself after a coach from your past?
8. How would you define ethics?
9. Do you believe teaching ethics would make change in athletics?

## **APPENDIX D**

### **DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY QUESTIONS**

1. With what gender do you identify?
  - a. Male
  - b. Female
2. Please specify your ethnicity.
 

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. White</li> <li>b. Black or African American</li> <li>c. Hispanic or Latino</li> <li>d. American Indian or Alaskan Native</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. Asian</li> <li>f. Pacific Islander</li> <li>g. Other</li> </ol>
---	---
3. What is- your age range?
 

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 18-24</li> <li>b. 25-34</li> <li>c. 35-44</li> <li>d. 45-54</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. 55-64</li> <li>f. 65-74</li> <li>g. 75+</li> </ol>
--	--
4. Do you currently, or have you ever coached within an athletic governing body?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
5. What is the highest level you have coached in your chosen sport?
  - a. Beginner/Club
  - b. High School
  - c. College
  - d. National Competitor/Professional
  - e. World Competitor
  - f. Olympian
6. How many years have you been coaching your chosen sport?
 

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 1-5 Years</li> <li>b. 6-10 Years</li> <li>c. 11-15 Years</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. 16-20 Years</li> <li>e. 21+ Years</li> </ol>
---	--
7. What is the highest level you competed at in your sport(s)?
  - a. Beginner/Club
  - b. High School
  - c. College
  - d. National Competitor/Professional
  - e. World Competitor
  - f. Olympian
8. What is the highest degree or level of school you have completed?
  - a. Bachelor's Degree
  - b. Master's Degree
  - c. Professional Degree
  - d. Doctorate Degree
  - e. Others

## **APPENDIX E**

### **DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY RESULTS**



Interviewee Code/Question Number	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8
A1	Female	White	55-64	No	N/A	N/A	Olympian	Doctorate Degree
C1	Male	White	45-54	Yes	High School	1-5 Years	High School	Master's Degree
C2	Male	White	25-34	Yes	Olympian	11-15 Years	College	Master's Degree
C3	Female	White	25-34	Yes	College	6-10 Years	College	Master's Degree
C4	Male	White	55-64	Yes	Olympian	21+ Years	National Competitor/ Professional	Master's Degree
C5	Male	White	25-34	Yes	College	6-10 Years	College	Bachelor's Degree
C6	Male	White	55-64	Yes	World Competitor	16-20 Years	World Competitor	Master's Degree
C7	Female	Black or African American	45-54	Yes	High School	6-10 Years	College	Doctorate Degree
AC1	Female	White	45-54	Yes	National Competitor/ Professional	21+ Years	National Competitor/ Professional	Bachelor's Degree
AC2	Female	White	45-54	Yes	Beginner/ Club	21+ Years	Olympian	Bachelor's Degree
AC3	Male	White	35-44	Yes	Olympian	6-10 Years	Olympian	Bachelor's Degree
AC4	Female	Other	35-44	Yes	National Competitor/ Professional	11-15 Years	Olympian	Master's Degree
AC5	Female	White	55-64	Yes	National Competitor/ Professional	16-20 Years	Olympian	Doctorate Degree

**APPENDIX F**  
**INTERVIEWEE A1 TRANSCRIPTION**

**Q:** Could you provide a brief overview of your experience as an athlete?

**A:** I started swimming when I was 7 and I was much, much better than everyone else but I wasn't serious about it all. That summer, I won the visitor's award when I came to sit at a few practices. We moved to Jacksonville, FL when I was 11 and there was a great coach there. His name was (Stricken from record for purposes of identification). He said "If you want to be great, you can be great and you're going to have to do it. You got to make the commitment." So, when I was 12 I was number one in the country, or my age group for 12-year-old. By the time I was 14 I was number one in the world. So, between 1977 and 1984 I was ranged somewhere between 1st and 5th in the world.

**Q:** Obviously a high-level athlete. Obviously understanding what organization, you were under, what kind of directives, rules and procedures did your organization have while you were competitive? As far as coaching conduct rules, athlete conduct rules, ethical rules that type of thing.

**A:** We had no formal rules in terms of coaches being alone with us, allowed to yell at us or coaches allowed to over train us. There was nothing formally written down. We had norms, which were a high degree of integrity of how everyone operated. When the East German and Russian team came in at different times and worked out with my team, they cheated in practice. I remember my first practice, I was world class between 1977 and 1984. In 1980, I went to Duke University which was nowhere near the standard level program I was trained in before. This was so profoundly outside my experience of the strictness of program I came from. Nothing was written down where I can say I was owed these rights. I depended on the fact that I was such a good athlete. I knew that my coach was getting money from the swim companies in order to have me wear their suit. It gave me the power where I didn't really have to stay with that program. Everyone in the country wanted me. In terms of anything that I could go to someone and say the coach violated a policy, that didn't happen.

**Q:** Did your coaches in the past, with your college coach and coach from Jacksonville that you discussed, have any expectations or guidelines for their athletes that they were expected to follow. Could you describe a few that come to mind please?

**A:** Expectation was that in between workouts there was nothing other than getting ready for the next workout. The expectation was we were supposed to rest. The expectation was no drinking or no smoking pot, as smoking pot was huge. My parents tried to set a rule to say you can't date anyone 2 years older than you are. At 14 I was on national teams with guys who were 24. My coach was much stricter than my parents ever thought about being. He would say "You're not going to date." We got in the water on time, we didn't complain. Is that the kind of thing you're looking for?

**Q:** In your athletic career did you ever come across a difficult decision that you had to make a choice to have an issue resolved. If so, can you describe it?

**A:** Lots of them, and I think every athlete does. My 1984 Olympic coach was named [REDACTED]. He is now on the banned list of coaches for sexual abuse. He was molesting my teammate while I was coaching with him. I knew he had his reputation. He had already married a friend of mine, a swimmer. I didn't understand why another team member was so upset about him marrying somebody else. This was 1984 and I dropped out of college for a year and a half because I

trained for the 1984 Olympics. I knew he had his reputation, but I needed a team that wasn't associated with a school, and that was hard to find. They're on a different schedule and I had already done that for years where I started training by myself. I left home at 15 and got trained for the 1980 Olympics. I was doing a lot of training about myself and that's hard. If you've ever tried to really push yourself on a set without having teammates around you, that's hard.

There were only 2 or 3 programs in the country I could go to. I go to this guy, [REDACTED], and sure enough he was having a relationship with a 16-year-old on the team. He was 33 at the time. I just thought he wasn't going to work with me. I was wrong. He tried to use me to make his girlfriend jealous. There was no flirting or anything between us, but she was pissed that he would spend time with me. By spending time, I mean coach me. She would get so mad at that. One day in the locker room, she comes in and starts yelling at me. She said that I wanted to go out with Mitch. I said "Woah, I don't know what you've heard, but let's go talk to Mitch and clear this up." She said "Okay talk to Mitch. I believe him, not you!" She was hot under the collar. I walked out of the room and I didn't realize the whole team had this idea that I was interested in him. I had this dilemma. I think it was January. I had 4 months before Olympic trials. Do I stay here, or do I go? If I stay, how do I do it? How am I going to stay in this toxic situation here? I did stay because I didn't have money to go somewhere else. I was in release and I was living with my roommate who was not a swimmer. We were roommates at Duke, and she had graduated. I couldn't leave her. I had other obligations. So, what I did was say okay you're not going to get your mojo from your coach but from your teammates, so that's what I did. I froze him out. And fortunately, I had phenomenal teammates. I had [REDACTED], who is a multi-signed Olympic gold medalist. On my team, two of us made it to the 1984 Olympics. We had 7 of us get 3rd at Olympic trials. So, 9 people who were within a whisker of making the team! It was good for me to rely on teammates and see how others exercise leadership.

**Q:** What do you believe as an athlete, the duties and responsibilities of a coach should be?

**A:** I wanted them to focus on the pool. I didn't want friendly. All my coaches were really lousy when it came to nutritional advice. My coach gave me a very, very hard time about my weight until I had a body fat percentage test done. Most of the swimmers were at about 20% and my biggest competitor was 22%. I weighed 30 pounds more than her and I was at 11% body fat. It was wonderful, I never had to get on the scale. My coach was trying to have me weigh what my competitor weighs, just crazy ideas on not eating until you get to the way you want. Just eat eggs, and I can't remember what the 3 things were. What I think they're duties where was to have a partnership with me and help achieve my goals in the water. I honestly think I learned more about leadership from teammates than my coach. As an attorney, there are a lot of boundaries. I do a lot of work with sexual abuse and a lot of clients want me to be their therapist. I have to remind them "I'm your lawyer and here are the parameters of what I can do for you." I have to be very clear that I'm not here for emotional support. I saw outside experts. I worked with this guy who's really good at teaching meditation, and that was really helpful. I didn't depend on my coach for that.

Before you asked me about some experiences where I had a dilemma and I had to figure out what I was going to do about it. So, I'm working backwards here. When I was 12 years old my coach [REDACTED] put me on the senior team. The other girls are at least 4-5 years older than I am. It's kind of the same age difference right now. I have 12-year-old twins and my son is 17 and I have this new insight. My son wants nothing to do with his siblings. It was very obvious

to everybody that I was up and coming. They were outstanding athletes and they had a real shot at making the 1976 Olympic team. They really made my life hell and bullied me. They used to fight over “She’s not going to be in my lane!” “She’s gonna be in your lane!” “No, I’m not gonna have her, you’re gonna have her!”

My coach really stood up for me and I really appreciated that because I felt wonderful and masterful in the water. If I only looked at the content of my teammates at the time when they were at their worst, I probably would have quit. I did have the support of my coach who said, “Here’s how we’re all gonna treat each other.” My sophomore year in college I was raped, and it was 2 ½ hours. It was really brutal, and I was beaten up quite a bit. Physically I was okay to swim, but mentally when I let my mind wander, I would go back to the event. I had PTSD and I didn’t know that at the time. My dilemma was I’m a full scholarship athlete. I talked it over with my coach and tried to explain it as best as I could. Nobody knew the term PTSD it was like “Why can’t she just go to sleep.” I got in the habit of checking doors before I got to sleep, and I still had a hard time not checking the door. My coach told me “You’re going to win in the 1984 Olympics, and you need a break. We’re just going to use this as your break. You’ve been training at a high level for a long time.” I got to keep that tie to swimming. Fortunately, I had the right coach at the right time.

**Q:** Would you in your own words define ethics?

**A:** USSC created the coaching ethics guidelines, and I agree with every word. It talks about coaches not engaging in sexual intimacies or in business partnerships with their athletes. Coaches do not exploit their athlete’s performances for their own economic being. It really lays out the boundaries.

**Q:** Do you believe that teaching ethics as part of a coaching program would actually make changes in a coach’s ethical beliefs?

**A:** I think teaching ethics explicitly is so important. The older I get the more I see how important it is and I see how vulnerable athletes are. I was lucky for the vast majority of my career to have really ethical coaches and I had one very bad coach. I didn’t have the framework to understand why [REDACTED] was so bad in so many ways. It wasn’t just that he was using me to make his girlfriend jealous. I would have loved to have had a framework to understand appropriate coach-athlete relationships and now as an attorney I see how teaching ethics explicitly can protect athletes from all different kinds of abuse; physical, emotional and sexual abuse. Unfortunately, we live in this crazy culture that tells athletes that they’re a bit like soldiers and that they’re supposed to do everything their coach tells them to do. A bad coach can injure an athlete very badly in no time at all. The athlete needs the permission to say no.

The Orange County Register has a really good article about the injury rates were for gymnasts. I went on twitter and said how absurd these injury rates are. At 16 I never had a serious injury because it wasn’t because I had some unique special body. I just said no. Most of the gymnasts, 62% of their injuries were from overuse. That is the most crazy thing. Every sport has to deal with overuse injuries. We were in the water 4 hours a day, training 800 laps a day, plus we ran and lifted weights. Soldiers have to do everything they’re told, and they don’t have permission to say no. They don’t have permission to own their own athletic experience aside from the coach’s job and being ultimately responsible. I learned one of the best lessons by myself. I won my first national championship at age 14 and at age 16 I got second place. I was so

mad, and I wanted an explanation. I realized there was no explanation, it was on me. I couldn't blame it on my coach. Athletes need to take ownership of their own career. I see the connection between ethics and athletes knowing their power in sports.

**APPENDIX G**  
**INTERVIEWEE AC1 TRANSCRIPT**

**Q:** Could you provide a brief overview of your experiences as a coach, as in types of coaching, years of experience, level?

**A:** I have been coaching for over 25 years. I've coached from 5-year-old all the way to--I had a summer that was top 30 in the world and everything in between.

**Q:** In your experiences as a coach, what kinds of directives, rules and procedures does your organization provide you to guide you?

**A:** I know when I first started coaching there was minimal guidance. United States Swimming, especially when I first started coaching, they did not make us do anything. Now they have, for new coaches, they have something called "Foundations of Coaching I and II." I was grandfathered into that, so I actually didn't have to. I never did the "Foundations of Coaching" because I already have coaching experience to where I didn't have to take those classes. But now that's required. I want to say at the beginning of my coaching career I didn't have any type of guidance. That's kind of how I feel about it. I know that the resources are better now. I still don't go into the United States Swimming website and look at a lot of stuff because I feel like it's very one sided and they want things to be done a certain way. I don't necessarily believe in that and so I kind of look outside of United States Swimming for different resources and that's kind of what I've done my entire coaching career. Unfortunately, I have to bring up ASCA, the American Swimming Coaches Association. That was a place early on in my coaching career that I would go to coaching clinics and do different things from what ASCA offered. I no longer do that I don't believe in ASCA. Really as a coach in swimming you have to go out looking for things if you want to make any changes or you want information as to how to do something. It's not offered to us, there's no guidebook. "Hey you're a first time coach let me give you this toolkit"-we don't have anything like that. It's pretty much somebody decides to coach and it's up to--I'm a head coach of a swim team and so I have to give my coaches guidance as to what I want them to do or what I want them to look at. That's kind of how I mentored people throughout my coaching career.

**Q:** I know you mentioned mentoring and the fact that your NGB doesn't offer a lot of material for guidance. Do you believe that you modeled yourself as a coach by another coach you had as an athlete or had worked with as a coach in the past?

**A:** Yes and no. Yes, as far as, I think I started off almost saying word-for-word different things that I was told as a swimmer. I was basically told the same thing with all of the coaches I had back when I swam. Like "It's not a democracy, it's a dictatorship." "My way or the highway." I'm embarrassed that I actually used those terms, but it was something--that's what I heard my entire coaching career, all those types of things. "If you don't like it get out." It was addictive and I didn't know anything else. But I can also say, as a coach, I made the decision as a coach that I didn't want to do things the exact same way as my coaches did because I never felt--I didn't want my swimmers to feel how I felt during my swimming career. Even though I said some things, I recall things my father said to me growing up and I'm like "I'm never going to be like my dad." It's kind of like that where you hear yourself say something and it's like "Oh yeah, my coaches used to say that to me." I feel like my coaches were super abusive, throwing things at people. Coaches were having tantrums and stuff back then. I never wanted to behave like that.



**Q:** Did you find yourself acting in any of those manners initially as a coach?

**A:** Yeah. I never threw anything, but I could tell you that I definitely had tantrums. Some kind of version of a tantrum. I wouldn't say it started immediately because when I first started coaching as a career, I was coaching a developmental group, so they were super young kids that never swam before. I actually started yelling to get my point across, but I learned very quickly that yelling wasn't going to get me anywhere. I mean yelling as in, not like screaming and yelling at a kid for something, but like "Hey you guys aren't paying attention," like raising my voice. I thought at 24 years old that I needed to project a larger image of myself.

**Q:** Speaking of athletes, and you can describe this in both the younger athletes as well as your high-level athletes, and also in the fact that you were an athlete and now as a coach this question might relate to you in 2 manners. **Q:** Do you have any expectations or guidelines that your athletes are expected to follow or when you were an athlete did your coaches have guidelines and rules that you were expected to follow?

**A:** Yes, and yes. I've always wanted my swimmers to breathe every 3 on freestyle and that's based on keeping their body balanced so I'm super vigilant about that. Making an entire group start over if people aren't following that after I've given them a maximum of 3 redirections. It's usually one person that tries to fight me on it or moves up into my group from another team or something like that. Breathing every other on butterfly. I think those are the 2 that I still even use today. I'm adamant about the fact that I want my swimmers to be breathing every 3 on free and every other on butterfly. I know in the past I've been--if people came in late, they either got kicked out of practice or had to do burpees or something like that. I've used burpees as punishment or pushups or something like that. In the past, I mean in 25 years of coaching you try something new, because kids like or dislike certain things. I was pretty stubborn when I was a swimmer. If I wasn't doing something correctly, which I always felt like when I was a swimmer--that nothing I ever did was good enough even pushing off the wall I didn't do correctly. We all had to do butterfly or something, that was big punishment back when I was swimming. Or we're all going to do flies for 5,000. I find fly's not to be a good punishment. I just remember everything being "This is my way or go somewhere else" basically from push offs to pullouts to the drylands that we did. I had a coach where we swam up to 10,000 meters at practice twice a day. I ran at least 6 miles a day and did dryland every day, so I felt like everything that I did that's the way that it had to be, or you go somewhere else. It wasn't like I have to breathe every 3 or breathe every other on fly.

**Q:** I'm going to ask this question to you in 2 different manners. I'm going to start at the first time as an athlete. Did you ever experience a situation as an athlete during your competitive career in which you had to make a difficult decision or had to resolve a difficult situation?

**A:** Yes. The first thing that comes to my mind is when I was 14 and I had to swim--I was the only girl on my team that was going to Nationals and there were 6,7, or 8 guys that made it and I was the only female. So, my coach had me training with them and resting for the meet with them, so I was swimming with them constantly. I was also the youngest, everyone else was 16-18 and this guy [REDACTED], he got the group of guys to sort of bully me. He bullied me, but he

got everybody else to. He was the ring leader. Every time I would try to get into the lane we swam in, they would swim in a circle in the pool, so I couldn't actually get in and swim and it started 2 weeks before Nationals. One day while this was happening my coach was in the office, he stepped off the pool deck, and I kept trying to get in the lane and they wouldn't let me. So, I finally got in and I was swimming for a brief amount of time, maybe 5 minutes, and [REDACTED]-- there's probably 40 people in the pool itself but we're in one lane because we're doing something different than everybody else is and [REDACTED] stops the entire group, these 30-40 kids. Everybody stops because he's the leader of the team, and he says to everybody in the pool "Does anybody like [REDACTED]?" and nobody raised their hand. I got out, I called my dad and I went home and I refused to go back to practice because I was deeply hurt by it. My dad was really pissed off because I wouldn't tell him what happened, and he was like "Well why don't you want to go to practice? You have Nationals in 2 weeks." I said, "I don't want to go there." Eventually I ended up going back, I don't remember I was fairly traumatized by the whole thing, so I don't remember everything that happened afterwards, but I ended up going to Nationals with these guys. During warm ups, they say to me "We just want you to know that when your event comes up, we are going to the bathroom because we'd rather be in the bathroom than watch you swim." So, I remember being behind the blocks and they sort of made this parade to make sure I saw them from the bleachers to the bathroom. I got up on the blocks and had to try to swim.

**Q:** Did your coach or anybody within the club that you were involved with intervene in any manner to try to stop this?

**A:** Nope.

**Q:** Same type of question but from a coach point of view. As a coach has there ever been a difficult situation that you've had arisen in your time that you've had to deal with and if so would you mind elaborating on how you dealt with that?

**A:** Yeah. There are so many I don't even know where to begin. The latest one is I had a 14-year-old boy in last November he dropped a whole bunch of times at a meet that we went to and he ended up just about as fast as my fastest boy who was 4 years older. I think it was very shocking for everyone. I didn't really think it was that big of a deal because I thought my team was pretty close and we came back from the meet after this kid had just swam phenomenally. Everybody did. Every single person except one. I think I took like 20 kids to this meet in [REDACTED]. I had one kid that just did not do well but everybody else they swam amazing. We came back and I started hearing things about how he was being bullied by 3-5 kids. When somebody is the ring leader of bullying you have people who naturally do that with them because they don't want to be bullied themselves. The ring leader is a little bit of a troubled kid and I think some of the other ones, younger ones, I think they were going along with it because they didn't want to get the same thing. What started happening was that they started calling him 'coachable' and 'he was my favorite' and stuff like that. So, at that point I couldn't even take anybody out of the water because I like to talk to them during practice. Especially after a meet I like to take them individually and make sure they know how I thought they did and ask them what their goal is up until the next week. I like to continually hear what they have to say so they have something in their mind as well. This bullying really got to the point where anybody that I would talk to individually they would start getting picked on. It really just became this--I was getting calls

from parents about how upset their kids were and this kid didn't want to come back to practice. It was really bad and very unexpected. I never even saw this coming. These were kids that have known each other for a very very long time. At first, I didn't know how to handle it and the owner of my swim team who was the head coach. I became the head coach. I had him come in because he had coached these kids much longer than I had and we sat them down as a group and talked to them about teamwork and how we treat people and stuff like that. I spoke to kids individually as well at the same meeting. I talked to every single person in the group so that I wasn't singling out anybody. I just know how I always felt as a swimmer or even just as a professional person. Being singled out, especially in front of somebody, made me feel really crappy. The bottom line is I think pretty much on a daily basis how I don't want my swimmers to feel bad because I felt bad most of my swimming career. No matter what I did I was not good enough and basically my coach hated me. That's what I thought. So, I talked to them individually and some of them I talked about the bullying and some I talked about how they felt about what was going on with the team and if they wanted to talk to me about anything. That was our couple of hours that we spent trying to bring the group back together. It didn't help.

**Q:** What was the impact of the decision as far as how it was dealt with?

**A:** It didn't help but it did help. It didn't help the kid, the ring leader. He did not make any changes whatsoever. The amount of people following him after that though it got to be fewer swimmers. It was really like 2 or 3 swimmers that would sort of not let it go. This kid and another one of the bullies ended up leaving my team in December anyways because those 2 guys and myself we were just clashing a lot. It ended up ironing itself out I think once those 2 guys left because I think any of the other kids, they didn't have a leader, so it stopped happening.

**Q:** I would like for you to describe a brief overview of your experience as an athlete. In not only what you accomplished in what you did but also experiences with your coaches and stuff to that manner.

**A:** I was a National level back-stroker. I made Olympic Trials, but I got disqualified and I was never able to repeat that swim. I totally believe that I made Olympic Trials because I did, but I got DQd so I couldn't go. Nobody else believes me. I was a good back-stroker. I got a college scholarship to [REDACTED]. Is that kind of what you want to know about my swimming?

**Q:** Did you have good experiences with your coaches overall?

**A:** No.

**Q:** Would you like to elaborate on that?

**A:** The thing is I truly, really liked some of my coaches but when I look back on what we were doing and things that were said I think it was hurtful. When I say love, I don't mean 'in love,' but I totally loved some of my coaches. The thing is they all basically coached the same way and that's how I thought things were until I went to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] was my coach. I actually was like "I'm going to swim horrible because he's way too nice, too nice. He's not being mean to me. Practices aren't hard enough." I would actually ask him "Hey can I go over to

that lane and do some more” because I wasn’t doing enough. I wasn’t being tortured. Every single day it was like I wasn’t going to swim well-being verbally abused. I look back and that’s how I felt because when you’re going through it you don’t know that.

**Q:** What do you believe the duties and responsibilities of a coach are?

**A:** I believe my duty as a coach is to get my stars to reach their potential or reach their goals. I know for myself I never tried to put my goals on a swimmer or what I think they should be doing onto my swimmers. If I’m projecting what does that look like? Could you explain briefly what that would look like? Like let’s just take my getting disqualified from Olympic Trials. If I’m projecting that I want someone to make Olympic Trials because that’s something I wanted to do, is that something you’re talking about?

**Q:** The term projection in that matter would mean living vicariously through.

**A:** No, I do not do that. Absolutely not. That’s something I’ve had conversations with people about. No. I’m not saying that maybe there wasn’t ever a time that I didn’t accidentally do that.

**Q:** Do you believe it’s an unintentional action or even a subconscious action?

**A:** Yes absolutely. I think most people would never have any idea that they’re doing that.

**Q:** Define morals and ethics for me in your own words.

**A:** Is it my morals and ethics or morals and ethics.

**Q:** Both actually. You can use your morals and ethics or describe them in a manner as you believe people see them. If I was to ask you define ethics, in your own words what answer would you give me?

**A:** Things that a person is bound by.

**Q:** Do the same thing. Describe morals in your own words.

**A:** Things that myself or other people live by.

**Q:** Do you believe that if we were to teach ethics in national governing bodies, NCAA, USOC that it would make a difference in how those within those governing bodies would act.

**A:** Yes. I strongly believe that you’re always going to have bad actors whether you get a list of ethics that you’re bound by. When I think about ethics I think about doctors and lawyers. Even a psychotherapist. Psychotherapist, one of the things I feel they are bound by and probably don’t do it though, that they don’t have relationships with their patients. To me that’s an ethical thing. In United States Swimming, is “Here’s the ethics that we follow in United States Swimming.” Yes, I think that would be helpful for coaches. This is what we do. This is the oath that we take as coaches that we’re not going to fuck our swimmers. It’s so ridiculous to me that we would

even need to have that shit. In the culture of swimming, I think things are still muddled and people have watched for decades different things go on. We go by what we've all learned in the past decades. Starting with this coach who did this and then they have swimmers "Oh we learned that." It's like going back when I said, "These are the things that I learned to say as a swimmer so now I say them as a coach." I see the same things happening as far as behavior. If we have some kind of ethics that we all abide by I think it would make a large percentage of changes. I just think that in any type of sport you're always going to have crappy people. I think that it would be less. United States Swimming just came up with some codes of conduct. Really in 2013 that's when they just figured out that you shouldn't be having relationships with your swimmers? People are still arguing about it 5 years later. I think it would possibly cut down on some things, yes.

**Q:** You discussed the fact that USA swimming has their conduct and rules and all of this. Are there any other guidelines that describe what is expected of you as a coach within US Swimming?

**A:** Maybe. I believe maybe stuff is sent out. Maybe we're alerted but there is nothing that's like "You must do this, or you can't do this." If I say "Maybe, I'll check out what's on the website" I know coaches won't do that. The only thing that we have as coaches is these little deck passes. You have to have coaching credentials, so this is the only thing United States Swimming makes you have. You can't be at a meet and you're not insured if you're not current on this. Their background check, which is problematic, your CPR has to be up-to-date. Your athlete protection, which they just started in 2013, it's this little video thing that you have to watch, and it basically teaches child molesters how to get away with continuing to do abuse. Safety training, which is sort of like a lifeguard training-basic back boarding, jumping in to save a swimmer, and then you take an online course That is what's required only. And then I told you about the "Foundations of Coaching I and II" for new coaches or within your first couple of years of coaching. That is more of how to coach a kid. I think they started requiring that in 2000 so everybody who had 5 years of experience we were grandfathered in that's why I can't even tell you what the Foundations of Coaching is.

**Q:** Based on your experience as an athlete, do believe that any of these rules and these programs and these codes of conduct and the fundamentals you described would have changed your experience as an athlete with your coaches.

**A:** No. I think the only thing that would have changed would be the one they passed in 2013 that you can't have a relationship with the swimmers. Within 2013 and now you can't live with a swimmer, you can't x,y,z with a swimmer the last 5 years. [REDACTED] was a world-renowned coach in United States Swimming who a bunch of us hate anyways. He's sleeping with a swimmer right now. You have all these good ole boys who continue to do whatever they want to do, and they get away with it because United States Swimming isn't going to do anything about it. I think maybe it would have made things more difficult. I think in my situation, obviously, I probably would never have lived with my coach because that would have been problematic. But that doesn't mean he wouldn't have found a way to abuse me. I already knew he was screwing somebody on my team when I moved in with him. It would make it more difficult for things, but I think it things would have happened anyways.

**APPENDIX H**  
**INTERVIEWEE AC2 TRANSCRIPT**

**Q:** Could you provide a brief overview of your experience as an athlete?

**A:** I started my sport when I was 5 years old and retired when I was 19 years old. I started at the absolute beginning level and got up to the Olympic level. My last competition was the Olympics. I had a couple competitions afterwards, but they didn't really amount to anything and then I retired.

**Q:** Could you provide the same overview of your experience as a coach?

**A:** I don't currently coach competitive. As soon as I retired from gymnastics, I coached the intermediate levels. Now I just do summer camps and I do a lot of mental training as far as coaching goes.

**Q:** Based on the organization that you've been involved with, what kinds of directives, rules, and procedures does your organization provide such as guidelines for coaches?

**A:** I'll coach high levels at camps, but I don't do every day coaching. Those camps are not US Gymnastics sanctioned events. They do not follow under any rules or policies.

**Q:** As an athlete what forms of rules, procedures and directives would you be expected to follow within your organization?

**A:** Most of the rules we had back then, we had a doping policy but that was more the Olympic committee. We had certain rules about our behaviors and mannerisms, getting along with other people. I don't remember having a lot of "rules" back then.

**Q:** When you coach and participate in coaching at camps? What kind of expectations and guidelines do you have for the athletes you work with?

**A:** These camps are designed to get the most efficient work from athletes in the shortest amount of time. Sometimes for us, if they have trouble getting a skill or understanding a skill, we help them understand or give them that one thing they can take back. Coaching camps is a little more difficult because these kids come without their coaches and so you don't want to change technique or change to where coaches don't want them to go to camp.

**Q:** During your athletic career, did you ever run into a situation where you had to make a difficult decision on something that had been going on that you might have disagreed with ethically?

**A:** I think as an athlete, we didn't make a decision one way or another. We didn't have that control. Back in [REDACTED] we had Olympic trials and the way our trials were designed was we had 2 athletes that were injured that had a good chance of making it. We ended up having a secondary camp where 6 of us qualified from Olympic trials to the camp and then we had the 2 extra girls at the camp. We had 8 kids at the camp. From those 8 kids, we had 2 days of training and we had to show our routines. Then the coaches went back and voted on who they wanted on the team. Only 7 of us made it, so there was 1 girl who didn't make it. We never saw her after that. In my career,

that was probably the shadiest, unclear event that we didn't know how to handle as athletes. We were young, and we hadn't made the rules. Looking back, I think there could have been a lot of different ways that could have been handled.

**Q:** Do you believe that situation had any impact on you moving forward as an athlete or in the aspect of when you're coaching athletes at these camps?

**A:** It's never affected me as an athlete because it happened right as my career was ending. I was focused on my last competition anyway. It does make me extremely more empathetic toward other athletes. You have the athletes who make the Olympic team and make their dream come true and a group of kids who were happy to compete. Then you have a small group of kids that truly had a chance but didn't make it and I think those are the kids most negatively affected. Those are the kids that we have to give the most compassion too. Every 4 years when the Olympics comes up, I know that it deeply still affects us, the girl that was essentially not with us. Some say she was kicked off the team. The rules were very unclear for us or they weren't told to us in detail. I think as far as how it impacts me for the future is I'm very empathetic and compassionate with the kids in her situation.

**Q:** What do you believe the duties and responsibilities of a coach are?

**A:** Coaching has evolved so much over the last 20 years that I feel like back then my coaches were very singularly focused. We didn't have the technique and the research I think as much as maybe the Soviet countries did or China. When those coaches came over to the United States, we had this huge influx of information on physical training. All of our coaches attached to that and they were seeing extreme success in being able to get their kids to do the success of gymnastics. Throughout those 20+ years we have had a lot of research of psychological developments, character developments, the importance of building an athlete up. I think a lot of coaches who are kind of uneducated in the psychological field don't quite understand psychology. I think the coaches who do understand the psychological aspect of sports are really starting to embrace it. There are a lot of things psychologically back then as an athlete that I thought I was being mentally strong or being tough. I think those things were working against me, today. A coach spends more time with those kids than their parents do and it's the coach's responsibility to build an entire person not just teach the physical skill. The physical skill is just one aspect of sport and competition. I feel like until coaches truly embrace the physical side, mental nutrition, the whole person then we really haven't seen the best of what we can create.

**Q:** Do you find that you model your coaching style based on a coach you had in the past.

**A:** My coaching style has evolved. I think its evolved in the last 10 years because I work a lot with the kids on the deep performance and mental side of the sport, so I hear how they interpret what coaches say to them. It's made me grow as a coach because I have a much more deep understanding the impact of my words. I had wonderful coaches, but they were 20 years ago so the techniques were different, it was very democratic, I had a lot of say. There were times I maybe thought I had too much say. That's also why I stayed at the gym because I knew that I wouldn't survive in any other place that was more authoritarian. I knew I wouldn't be able to keep my mouth shut. As I first started to coach, I was coaching more of just "Do what I say," but



I was also 19. Now I understand that I have 2 children of my own that coaching is hard and if you want to be a really good coach you have to work really hard at figuring out what makes the kid work and how to make them work instead of having them do what you want them to do.

**Q:** Do you believe that if we were to teach coaches about ethics that it would make change in their mannerisms and the way they do things within sport.

**A:** Yes, I think as far as all coaching goes. You're getting your Doctorate on Psychology and look at all the work you have to do to do that. Then we allow these people that have absolutely no license, they don't need an education, they don't need early childhood development. Some of these coaches are asking kids to do things that kids' brains are not developed to understand the concepts. We are allowing these coaches to spend up to 30 hours with these kids and they are not child development experts, they are just gymnastic technique experts. They spend 30 hours on gymnastics. I tried to implement some mental training programs and coaches would say "We don't have time." But it's part of training. Real education, not just websites where people take a test. I think all of our coaches need a master's degree in coaching to be licensed. I think that needs to be done on a congressional level. They need licensing to have children in daycares. We have a lot of uneducated people in sport. Education needs to be mandatory.

**Q:** Outside of rules and regulations, are there any other guidelines that describe what you would have expected of your coaches.

**A:** Not to be an asshole. I always wanted to write a book on how to be the perfect coach and literally have one sentence say, "Just don't be an asshole." I think they forget sometimes that it's a relationship and I always had a really good relationship with my coach. I was never scared to talk to them. I lived with them because we were allowed back then. He was always very respectful. He treated me like a father and coach, and it was never creepy. It was never inappropriate. I have a very good foundation and structure of what I think a coach is, a male coach too. Both of my coaches were very much that way, they could take us on trips and they never made me feel uncomfortable. I never felt I was going to be physically molested or sexually abused. It never crossed a line of pure respect for each other. I think I do model off of my coaches where I never make a relationship anything other than between that of an athlete and a coach. I don't need to get myself love from them honoring or idolizing me. I truly just want to help them. I think there are people who just shouldn't be coaches. Maybe taking some sort of character class for certain personalities. If coaches have these narcissistic tendencies or personalities, I think we need to intervene and make them take therapy classes. I don't want to kick everybody out. Nobody is perfect. What's happened to gymnastics and our sports is because nobody has done anything to change, now we have to change. We have to accept this. Psychology has always been the field in our sport, for the broken. It has a very negative association with it. They don't understand that it's not that. It's an education of how relationships work and how to make your athlete into the most confident, secure person.

**Q:** Could you define ethics for me?

**A:** Living in your morals and values. Making your decisions based on health and safety, morals and values that are honest and good for people.

**APPENDIX I**  
**INTERVIEWEE AC3 TRANSCRIPT**

**Q:** Could you provide a brief overview of your experience as a coach?

**A:** I started out assisting then national foil coach [REDACTED] while I was actually a competitive fencer. This included helping administrate the national men's foil team. I got to see how running a national program up close worked and how designing a program worked. While I was a competitive fencer not only was I on the team, but also his assistant. After my competitive career was over I started part-time coaching at [REDACTED] fencing in 2008. In 2010 I opened my own fencing club, the [REDACTED] Fencing Club.

**Q:** Could you provide a brief overview of your athletic career?

**A:** I got interested in fencing in 1989 when I was 13 years old. I had a video game called Summer Games 89 which had all the Olympic sports on their including fencing. I was pretty bad at the game, but fencing seemed to really interest me, so I asked my mom about it. She said "I don't know anything about it, but they have it at your high school. Go see the coach." That happened to be US fencing hall of famer [REDACTED]. Even though I was in Middle School, he let me workout with the high school team ~~him~~ and then put me in contact with my coach who would be the coach for the rest of my career, [REDACTED] when I was 15 turning 16. In 1996 I was on Junior World Team for Men's Foil and 1997 I was on my first senior national team. I was on 7 senior national teams. I qualified for 8 but couldn't compete due to injury. I was on 2 Pan American Games teams, 2 World University games teams, the 2004 Olympic team. I was previously ranked 10th in the world being the only second US men's foil fencer ever to achieve an FIE (Fédération Internationale d'Escrime, the international governing body for the sport of fencing) top 16 ranking.

**Q:** What kind of directives, rules or procedures does US fencing provide to guide your actions?

**A:** Honestly not much. Besides being a member club and filling out that sort of paperwork and complying by USFA rules, there's really not much. We actually had an incident at my club about a month ago where a visiting fencer was hurt and had to go to the hospital and I got on a call with the person who was a head of the members and services committee. We realized there were no best practices for how to run a club, for what to do in an emergency situation like this. There's not a lot of guidance from the national federation on how to run a club, how to be a successful coach. I know there are programs like the USFCA out there and US Coaches College. Up until very recently, usually if you were certified by the US coaching college you would kind of run the other way.

**Q:** While you were an athlete, did they have the same issues regarding this as far as providing guidelines for athletes to follow?

**A:** I think that was a little different because they had guidelines handed down from the USOC and there were codes of conduct. Something to guide coaches that's relatively new is Safe Sport and that's been a big thing with everything going on. That's a big driver of behavior. Safe Sport didn't exist when I was an athlete. There were certain things we had to do like attend national training camps. There were guidelines in the athlete handbook, but it wasn't particularly strict. It was on doping, codes of conduct at World Cup.

**Q:** As a coach, do you have any expectations or guidelines that you would expect your athletes to follow and abide by?

**A:** We have a code of conduct everybody is supposed to sign at the club, outlining that we expect proper behavior, respect toward coaches, respect toward the club, respect for the sport. We have stuff like that.

**Q:** Have you ever experienced a situation during your coaching career in which a decision that you had to choose was rather difficult or had to resolve a difficult situation? Could you describe a little bit about that and how you handled it.

**A:** Every once in a while, I would have to break up a fight. I've only had one physical altercation at the club, but it was over pretty quickly. By the time I turned around it was over. I've had some almost situations get into physical blows. I don't yell a lot so when students hear me yell they know I'm serious and actually angry. In those situations, I've had to kick people out of the club for the day or week or whatever and call or email parents involved.

**Q:** What's the impact of your decision on how you choose to deal with those situations?

**A:** Usually, I lay down some consequences. Here's one that came up fairly recently but wasn't a physical altercation. You know fencing is filled with teenage boys. Combined with sexual harassment and stuff that's been going on we've had boys who like to go around the club and pull each other's shorts down. I said this has to stop. It happened once when they were doing it while a 10-year-old boy who was getting his first lesson. Once that student left, I lined everybody up and gave them a talking to. I said "Listen, do you want me to go out of business? This will happen. Do you want there to be a place where you fence?" One of my fencers started laughing and I was like "Why are you laughing?" She said, "It's funny" and I said "You think it's funny that I can go out of business. It's funny that I can get sued. This happens again you're gonna get kicked out for a week if it happens a second time you're gonna get kicked out of the club." It hasn't happened since. The best consequence that I can give is to take away the kid's fencing. That's one of the quickest ways to solve a problem.

**Q:** Did you ever experience one of those situations as an athlete?

**A:** I had a very large disagreement with a teammate. I had to hash things out and have a discussion of what he saw versus what I saw.

**Q:** As a coach what do you believe the duties and responsibilities of your position are?

**A:** To teach the students fencing. To teach them how to use the lessons learned in fencing to be better people. To use fencing to be responsible, caring human beings. To be great fencers, get results, and get into the college of their choice. Life skills, problem solving, hard work, determination.

**Q:** Besides rules and regulations are there any other guidelines that describe what are expected of you as a coach?

**A:** I have no idea.

**Q:** Let's follow that up with another question. Do you find that you model yourself after another coach you had in your athletic career?

**A:** I use techniques, tactics and teachings from my coach with my own spin on it. I definitely try to have a different relationship with my students than my coach did. I just draw lessons from coaches I've either seen or read about in books or articles. I wouldn't say I model after one particular coach.

**Q:** Can you describe the relationship you had with your coach

**A:** It was a bit distant. Not quite all business but very close to it. We had a communication gap because he didn't speak English great. There was always that. I think he kept me at a distance on purpose as part of his method. We actually got closer after I stopped competing and started coaching.

**Q:** Could you define ethics for me?

**A:** I guess an honorable and moral code of conduct. Knowing the difference between right and wrong.

**Q:** Do you believe if we taught ethics to coaches that it would make change in the way coaches act? In what manners do you believe it would change?

**A:** Yes. I definitely think it would change some of the way's coaches relate to their students. I think it would change the way coaches see their students. I think it would put into perspective what our job is and what we're doing.

**APPENDIX J**  
**INTERVIEWEE AC4 TRANSCRIPT**

Q: Could you provide a brief overview of your experience as an athlete?

A: I started as a fencer in 1987, so I was 6 years old when I started fencing and I made the Olympic team. In '95 I became the youngest and also the first American to win the World Championship in each category. I started fencing because my sister was fencing at the time, and she's 5 years older than I am. She started at 8 years old and I was only 3 or 4. I've been exposed to fencing since I was quite young. I tried out for 2 teams in 2004 and then in 2008.

Q: Could you provide a brief overview of your experience as a coach?

A: I've been coaching since I was a kid. I remember leading practices at 12 and giving some lessons. When I stopped competing, I started coaching. In 2008 I started coaching and I bought the fencing club at the same time, so I became a business owner and coach at the same time.

Q: What kinds of directives, rules or procedures does your organization provide to guide your actions as a coach or as an athlete.

A: You want to laugh. The unfortunate part about fencing is that there are not enough organizations with credentialed coaches. A lot of it is people using experience. As someone who owns a business it's been very difficult. I have no idea how good someone is as a teacher or a coach because we don't have a credential organization. I've advocated several times and I thought about having internships and an organization affiliated and accredited by a university and people getting teacher backgrounds. Basically, becoming a PE teacher with a specialty in fencing. There is none and that's the difficulty. As a business owner for me, teaching is very very important. I care about people's fencing experience, but I care more about their ability to teach children and to teach adults. When I choose coaches or when I coach those are the most important pieces for me.

In Europe, there is accreditation and master's degrees in France and Germany and Hungary. If you want someone to learn you send them to these master's programs and in France, you need a PE background. Same thing is Russia. You go to an actual university and you get a PE degree and also at the same time become a fencing coach. For me, it's basically the Wild West here in the United States and as the sport goes and becomes more "professional." In the last 20 years we have become one of the best fencing countries in the world, yet we haven't grown our coaching academy. I know they're trying that at the Olympic committee level but until they are accredited by a university there isn't a whole lot that I think is being done. Me personally and in house what I do is try to continue to use education within my group. Now I have 4 coaches and 2 assistant coaches. I think one of the problems too is that fencing coaches often have this kind of snobbery about "Oh this is fencing. You don't know how to teach fencing." I've tried to go to PE programs locally and say, "I will teach you how to fence, I will teach you how to show fencing, I will teach how to teach fencing." You can teach people how to teach fencing, but you can never teach someone how to be a teacher. They have to be taught formally or have years of experience. I laugh because a lot of organizations are like that. They give money for organizations for medals, whatever we need to do to make those medals we decide. We are only given money or incentivized to have medals. A lot of these sports that aren't swimming or basketball, a lot of these coaches are foreign nationals. American coaches are at a detriment if we don't have more

formalized organizations or formalized places where these coaches can learn and have a professional background. I think teachers are the most important profession. I think that coaching should also be just as professional. You have to know the intricacies of how the human brain works, how the body works and those are very complex systems. There is nothing that bind them to have a professional degree. It may be different in larger sports, but it's not in the minor sports. My husband coaches the kindergarten soccer team. And what allows him to do that? He's not vetted, he didn't sign anything, he's not doing any Safe Sport. How do you create an atmosphere of professionalism for teaching and coaching?

Q: Do you personally have any expectations or guidelines that your athletes are expected to follow.

A: My athletes sign a code of conduct. This year I'm looking it over to make sure it includes social media conduct. We're having issues with that. We as an organization pride ourselves in being a safe place for kids to learn and grow. It's another place outside of schools or another touchpoint with adults that care about their learning and their wellbeing and psychological and emotional well-being. I pride myself in that. It's a big sport, so I have hundreds and hundreds of kids. I've got just enough kids and just enough coaches so that we can all take care of the people that are within our organization. The kids sign a code of conduct, the parents are held to a standard, It's very important. We all have to be on the same page to teach.

Q: Did your coaches have any expectations or guidelines that you were expected to follow as an athlete?

A: At the beginning of the season there are expectations. We sign a code of conduct. There are cultural codes of conduct within our organization and there's also an expectation of competition and organized practices that they're expected to be a part of. The coaches have them sign it and agree to it and the parents also sign it and agree to it. I think we are much more organized than my coach was. My parents are immigrants to this country so for them they were like "This person is a subject-matter expert so tell us what to do and we follow it and then we just go from there." My mother's Asian so there was no questioning the teacher. There weren't any written out guidelines. He set very high expectations however my coach was extremely abusive as well. Now as I own a fencing club, he would never be an employee.

Q: Have you ever experienced a situation during your coaching career in which you had to make a difficult decision or had to resolve a difficult situation.

A: You have to make a difficult decision all the time. Every word that comes out of your mouth is important because you are in every moment teaching. You are not just teaching the kids but you're teaching the parents. I think for me, one of the difficult aspects was dealing with conduct. Speaking rudely towards another person or a coach, those things would be addressed. I don't like kicking kids out of programs. Also, I've made some mistakes too. I sat a kid in a meeting room and I talked to them and I closed the door. Now we have certain policies like don't close the door. Those types of situations do come up and a lot of time it's just behavioral. Emotional and behavioral instability. I had another situation that I actually handles well where a kid was very hard on himself and he punched a hole in the wall. He was so angry. We're in a combat sport and



you're one on one so a lot of these emotions come up very readily. His expectation was for me to reprimand him. Instead I said, "I know you're under a lot of pressure and stress and here you can make the mistakes, but you have to right up the mistakes." He said, "Well I'm gonna patch up the hole and I'm going apologize, and I'm going write an apology."

I think we have to allow some grace to the children and to the adults to make mistakes. And to be there to allow them to make mistakes. And to guide them through it. "You made a mistake that's okay. No one was hurt. Here's an opportunity for you to learn something." I think the more you can do that, the better off human being become, and the better off people are. For me, those are difficult situations dealing with that, and also dealing with parents, Parents have these crazy high expectations sometimes. I think they're always afraid to have their kids be bad, or emotional about something. Every opportunity we have to help parents along in the process, how you help kids process failure, I think those are really, really difficult. We've been very fortunate with the parents we have. You have to help and educate the parents and you have to work with them. You also have to allow grace and opportunity for learning experiences with the kids.

Q: Could you describe your fencing coach?

A: He was probably a standard of "Don't ever fucking do that". He was abusive emotionally and physically. He would pit us against each other. He is the gold standard of what not to do. His coach was like this too. He would hit us with the weapon if we didn't do something. If we didn't do something immediately, he would go into a rage and hit us with his weapon. I was cut along my arms and legs. I would wear long pants and long sleeves in the summertime because I didn't want people to ask me questions about my arms and legs. I finished a competition and I did really well, but he would tell me I wasn't good enough at lunging, so I needed to do 1,000 lunges right there on the spot. There was a lot of humiliation tactics, there was a lot of demeaning, there was a lot of putting you in your place and listening without questioning. It's funny because I have a really good relationship with him now. He's still a national coach. After he left in 2000 I think he had a come to Jesus moment and he's also in New York City where people won't let you do that. He never did it again. He was an animal when he was here and letting loose on all of us screaming and yelling. Those affects are constant in my life but I'm very thankful personally to have had that because I know what a good teacher is. If you want to make an athlete good really fast at a really young age, you treat them like that. It doesn't mean they'll be a good athlete in adulthood, which I wasn't because I wasn't able to process failure very well on my own when I left him. When you're an adult trying to deal with emotional things that you have to fail without someone screaming and yelling at you, it's hard. It's taken me a very long time to unravel the effects of what he was like. We would show up, he would hit me so much that someone would say "I'm gonna call the police on him." He would change the lesson with my parents. Because we were successful people felt, like "We don't know much about fencing. He's very successful and he seems very driven. He seems really into it and everybody is very successful." I was 14 years old winning a world championship. You take someone who's a good athlete who works really hard, puts their head down and works, then you include in that the one driving and ripping them. Then when they become an adult with a mind of their own they unravel very quickly.

Q: What do you believe the duties and responsibilities of a coach are?

A: You are extremely responsible for giving children a safe place to learn and to fail. Not just children, but adults. When you are in front of someone, you are importing knowledge. You are giving them joy and igniting in them fuel to learn the sport and to learn more about themselves. To make them a better a human being. To make them their best self. You are in charge with making this person better and working with them in a partnership to make them better. You are helping them along their journey to raise them up. You are giving tools and skills to do that. It's a huge responsibility. You are another conduit, as their parents in their lives that can either make or break them. You are an extremely important person in their lives.

Q: Could you define ethics for me?

A: I guess I should probably be able to know this as a coach, as a business owner, and I went to business school. I guess in simplicity ethics for me is treating everyone equally. Treating everyone with respect and treating yourself with respect. If you make decisions and you feel like "I'm not respecting the person that's in front of me making this decision, then that's a problem." Treating people with respect which can also mean acknowledging that people have different opinions. That they may be on a different path and journey. That they are on a different learning curve. But you treat them with respect. I think ethics for me is about respect and it's about feelings. I'm a feelings person. If you feel like the situation is incorrect, you're probably most likely right that it's incorrect.

Q: Do you believe if we were to teach ethics to coaches it would make change in the way coaches act?

A: I think it depends, as it always does. It depends on who's teaching it and what the curriculum is. You want to make sure it's broad and simplistic enough. I think sometimes when we make policies, we stronghold people into things. Like Safe Sport-you want to make sure people are safe, where they're not in individual situations where they can get hurt but at the same time you also don't want to feel like you're constantly being big bothered. If there were more broad teaching about respect, making the right decisions, here are some best practices and then allowing people to exercise their judgment. Giving enough information so they can make a judgment that increases the amount of respect between people and the exchange of knowledge. I think any sort of education is important. I think asking the question very pointed "If teaching ethics equals x" I just don't think anything ever does. Teaching anything doesn't equal x. Everybody is such an individual on how they receive information, what kind of information they receive. I think that's a more complex question. I don't think it's  $x + y = z$ . I just don't think it's that equation. I think teaching ethics is part of a larger curriculum. Having people give you feedback I think that's all great. I think any sort of education for coaches that increases their awareness and helps them be a better teacher is great.

Q: Do you believe you model your coaching style after a coach you had in the best.

A: I modeled the opposite of what my coach was. Every time I'm inspired by a teacher, every time I'm not inspired by a teacher, all of those moments are really important from professors to teachers to coaches. All of those lessons are really important. I think they teach you how you

respond to things. Maybe this is how people respond to this and maybe this is how some people respond to that.

Q: Besides rules and regulations, are there any other guidelines that describe what is expected of coaches inside your organization?

A: Yes of course. It's a culture you create. Just as I coach my kids, I coach the coaches. I say "Here are the expectations. You are allowed some mistakes, but we need to correct them. These are the overarching ways we do things and how we want to do things, and how we want the kids to feel. These are our priorities." It's a back and forth conversation. Also, always analyzing how are we doing? How are the kids doing emotionally, physically? What are our metrics here? Is it just that we're winning or is it that these kids are successful in school? Are they emotionally capable of dealing with failure, dealing with situations that are difficult? Not just rules and regulations. You set tone, but the culture is set constantly.

Q: Does your national governing body offer anything outside of rules or regulations to express expectations of you as a coach?

A: Our national governing body is not someone I ever talk to about any of those expectations. They don't set any expectations. All they do is ask for money for membership. They ask us to do Safe Sport. We only receive our insurance if we go through SafeSport training. They're never going to give us anything. They only take money from us. It would be nice to have some sort of systematic way for some more education. They do offer things, but far and few in between. I don't rely on my national governing body for anything.

**APPENDIX K**  
**INTERVIEWEE C1 TRANSCRIPT**

Q: Could you provide a brief overview of your experience as a coach?

A: My experience as a coach is about 10 years now. It's been only with women athletes primarily and it's ranged from K-2, elementary, middle school, and this year I was coaching JV level.

Q: So, your experience as a coach has been basically high school and below?

A: Correct.

Q: What kinds of directives, rules or procedures does your organization that you're involved with provide you as a guide.

A: Very few. At the wreck level, below high school, essentially none. I've had one organization, that adopted the Positive Coaching Alliance so through that we had a framework for interacting and positive behavior. After 2 years of being there, I spent 3 or 4 years in another wreck. We simply just continued on our own and since then they've adopted it. But there had been nothing really in place. In another region there was nothing at all in place and the only reason I helped coach there was because as a spectator watching the coaching, I had another friend who wanted to coach, and I said, "I'll be your bench coach, so I could sort of bring a little structure on my expertise." At the high school level, the athletic director made it very clear what the expectations were at a coaching meeting. I found it to be completely lacking at the below high school level. I've had kids playing in high school for 6 years now. Now having been out in the field, everyone is self-taught. Kudos to those who have found their way to good coaching, but there just isn't anything I can see.

Q: Have you experienced anything in any of these organizations that have provided anything such as a code of conduct, code of ethics, moral standards?

A: Yes, there are. There's always something that "This is what you're going to do." As far as really connecting with someone. My girls play lacrosse. I sign these horrific waivers that lacrosse is a terribly dangerous sport that can result in injury and death. And you say, "Yeah I get it." In most cases it's more of, "This is for our liability, just sign it." It doesn't explain how you see such poor behavior that people would say "Oh we can't do anything about that".

Q: In your experience did you have any expectations or guidelines that your athletes were expected to follow.

A: Absolutely. What I tell families and players is honor the game, you're here to be a good teammate, you're here to listen, you have freedom, but you have to respect that. Playing time isn't equal, it's equal opportunity. Even at wreck level. There's that level of responsibility. At the high school level, we did have player contracts. The varsity coach I learned how she works. There was a very specific player contract. And she told me I could edit that. We put that forward first as to what kind of discipline especially when you get to high school. You talk about really poor behavior whether its drinking, disrespect, grades. We put those in writing and every player had to sign that. It was definitely structured at the high school level.

Q: In your own words could you describe to me what ethics means to you?

A: Ethics is what you do when nobody else is watching. I'm sure stealing words from somebody else. I hate to use buzzwords like moral compass. I think that has been used nobody knows what that means. It's lost its impact. It really means what do you do when nobody's watching.

Q: Have you ever experienced a situation while coaching in which you had a difficult decision or had to resolve a difficult situation regarding athletes or anything inside of the organization, your team specific. Anything related to that?

A: We did start out my introduction to high school coaching. I got contacted by the varsity coach saying "Hey, you got an issue on your team. One of your JV players is being bullied and she's got a cousin on varsity, so she confided in her and we have to deal with this." We had to sit them down, talk about that issue and really make it clear that that's just not what we're out here for. Probably the biggest issue we had to resolve recently.

Q: Did you find any impact or backlash related to that decision as far as had you dealt with it?

A: The interesting impact is I think is it commanded a tremendous amount of respect from the players. One player came up to me afterwards and said she just wanted to let me know that I've probably been hearing some things, which I didn't. She was like "Some people are probably thinking it's me, but I didn't do it." Initially I said "I don't know anything. We're moving forward, and this is a big deal, but we're not interested in looking back." I have no idea if she did it or if she did it in the past and was afraid. I never had any backlash in addressing it.

Q: Did you ever as an athlete have any incidents or issues that you believe would have given you the ability to deal with this situation in the manner that you did?

A: Yeah. Throughout my athletic career I would continually see players that didn't take things seriously. Those with cockiness and it was a social hierarchy. I saw it most starting in 6th grade which was when the intensity picks up, but it was a social hierarchy. As you get into high school then you see it get really intense, but I was fortunate to have been in a high school that had not just varsity and JV, but sophomore and they would actually create sophomore league games. We had freshman A and B games. There were a lot of opportunities to play. The incident that comes to mind is to recognize the one guy who was on sophomore A and give us a lot of crap. One guy in particular, he was real rough on us, but then junior year came around and he sat, never played. He stopped senior year. He came back around to being our friend. I remember one day he saw us at some after school thing and we said, "Come on let's go!" He said, "You let me come with you?" We said, "Of course come on!" It's a tough time for people, it's their identity. I bring that up because we just did our 30-year reunion where I go back to Chicago. He and I talked the whole time. At the 25th he and I really connected and talked about sports and about kids. I was laughing in my head thinking he learned. That's probably the best story I can think of. We hated him because he would go out of his way to stomp us down. Once he saw us later he did a big change and he's a better person for it. Those are the things that drive me as to why we look for it and address it. We're stern but have empathy. We're not here to beat people into submission.

Q: Q: What do you believe the duties and responsibilities of a coach are?

A: It is to make them better people. Flat out as a coach, not an instructor or manager. I had this discussion recently with a senior co-soccer scout in the UK. Managers take pieces and they use it, it's about strategy. The instructors give the manager the pieces in terms of they know what to do they have the skill. But the coach is the person to make them want to take that instruction and why they want to use that instruction for something. And to go beyond what a manager would tell them to do on the field. The greatest thing you see on any field that are do, it's not because the manager told them how to do it. It's because the player sensed that's what needed to be done and that comes from coaches. I hate the word life coach because it sounds too light but that is the duty. You are there to create people that understand what they want to do. Not what they need to do and to find the ways to how they can do it in a way that it serves and satisfies. You can do both. I talked with this person last night, and she's an athletic director. We were laughing because her dad had coached me on the basketball team. He was the B squad guy who helped us out. He was not a basketball coach, he was a psychologist. He just happened to be the neighbor of the head sophomore coach and they needed somebody. He was also a friend of my dad's, guys that rode the train together. We also talk about this guy because he didn't know anything about basketball, not really but he was probably the best high school coach I had. He actually coached us into doing things. He was the guy that's the epitome of how to coach mostly because of how basic his sports knowledge was, and he had zero "coaching" experience.

Q: Outside of rules and regulations, which we didn't really discuss much of, are there any other guidelines that describe what is expected of you as a coach?

A: Our athletic director makes it very clear. His thing is every time is "We're here to provide the athletic experience, which includes for spectators." He definitely has a meeting. I would sit in on those and he's very clear, to the point. At the wreck level, it depends. They're parents, volunteers so I give them a lot of slack on that. I've been very pleased with our high school level. I hear from other coaches that he's done well. In fact, there are some coaches that are not returning due to people finally voicing some abuse. He's invited them not to come back. These are not volunteer parents, these are younger people who want to be coaches. I do know when I see other places, I have to believe there's no enforcement that I see at the wreck level because I just don't understand why it can be so rampant in so many schools at both varsity and JV level. I think there are no expectations for the parents being enforced which I think influences how the coaches and athletic directors see it's their duty to do things. It's disturbing. I'm stealing a line from an international sports ethics guy. His big thing is "20% will always do the right thing. 20% will always do the wrong thing. Who's going to sway the 60%?" I think it's that 60% of the coaches can be swayed by 20% of the parents. I think it's how it's being undermined or supported by the people that surround the field and who are feeding and clothing those kids on the field.

Q: Let's combine the thought of parents and ethics. In your opinion as a coach, do you believe that coaches' ethics can be swayed by parents' demands?

A: Absolutely.

Q: Have you experienced that?

A: Not experience directly to me. I do know you'll see coaches who cave. They won't sit players, they're afraid to discipline. I'm having a hard time picturing who or when so maybe it's just a collage of memories. For me personally, when I see or hear things second or third hand I try not to obsess with it. I know there's definitely pressure. I saw it in high school because I just know there were players that had such poor attitudes. They should have been benched. I'll go back to that basketball experience, the head coach. He was a very strong coach, but not tortuous. Once I listened to him and got rid of some habits, he really rewarded me honestly for the rest of my high school career with respect and understanding. He scared most people. When I really understood him was when one of the other players was acting like they were the coolest thing ever and wouldn't put the balls away, he was your classic Freshman B coach. He was there to actually turn us into better people. We weren't going forward as basketball players you're Freshman B. You're there just to play ball. I caught him in the gym, and he saw the other player and said, "I'm not going to pick up that stuff cuz I'm too good for that." He was so disgusted by that guy's attitude and that's when it occurred to me the player had the coach wrapped around his finger because his parents were always talking to the couch. It was a small town with a lot of money. The kid was talented. I realized that coach would never discipline any of those players because he was afraid of the parents. It was clearly a horrible kid. Certain parents are always hovering around.

Q: Do you believe that there should be some ethical or moral standard in direct relation to the relationship of parent-coach in an athletic environment?

A: I would say no. We should all be able to figure it out. Sadly, we do need to have it in place. Laws are for the lawless. That's why we have them. We're not there to control people. You and I don't need to know there's a penalty for murder. I think people are not trained. I had a good experience on all this stuff. This is why I'm comfortable with any parent no matter how well I know them or how much I dislike them. I think you have to accept that if you have a culture and coaches aren't trained, you need to put some rules in place. I've seen things like the 24-hour rule. If a parent has an issue they must come with the player. I've seen some good policies to where number one you need a day to think about it, number two the player has to advocate for themselves, and number three if it really is something that the parent feels the player needs them there or the parent needs to speak they need to bring the player with, so they can understand. The rules need to be a simple policy of time and openness. I've seen where players shouldn't be coached by their parents. I think that's something you want to avoid. When I was asked to come in and coach JV because there weren't any coaches my daughters on varsity, so we avoided the problem. This guy I'm talking with on Tuesday his thing is he thinks zero tolerance. This has really influenced me over the last month, zero tolerance is a horrible policy because it prevents everyone from addressing the issue and people just find their way around it. I think there needs to be room for discussion, but zero tolerance is a horrible thing. We can have a zero tolerance for drinking, which we do but if there was a kid who had a horrible home situation and was doing that, we would get this kid help and back on the team because he needs the team. If you're just being stupid and wonder what's the big deal, you need rules like that. Every rule has an



opportunity to be broken. We should be able to have general guidelines and acknowledge that zero tolerance is the coward's way out.

Q: Do you believe that if we were to teach ethics to coaches and morals to coaches that it would actually create change?

A: It would if you do it in a way that's long term. By that I mean it can't be the ethics PowerPoint thing that we do online and that we answer questions the way we know we're supposed to and get a certificate. After 30 years of being a professional and looking at professional ethics, people 40, 50, 60 years old-it says we have an oath. It says we have to put the public welfare ahead of profits and everything else, yet in the business turn we find more ways that are not in the public's interest. We go through ethics training every year for 30 years. No one is working with them. I was raised fortunately on the job by old guys who had already done their 30-40 years. I found out later they wrote and gave the ethics training and they would say "We totally messed up we gotta go tell them." I read all those things, I was told all those things. Someone showed me that every day for 4 years. That was training. It works if the people at the highest tiers really believe it. Leadership, not by the numbers. You've got to believe it. Passing a course doesn't make you a leader it's what you do. If you have that in place, the ethics training takes place daily. You got to have someone who doesn't need the policy to be ethical. If you have that, that's the person who will make whatever program you put in place actually work. The way you operate has to be as if the policy is not the issue, it's the performance.

**APPENDIX L**  
**INTERVIEWEE C2 TRANSCRIPT**

Q: Could you provide a brief overview of your experiences as a coach?

A: I decided I wanted to be a coach when I was 14 years old. I actually had a really great coach that year and that was sort of what led me to that decision. He was very different from other swim coaches I had a really good time swimming for him that year. Much to my parents' chagrin, I decided I wanted to coach. There really wasn't much of a path forward for that. I taught some swim lessons for kids through my teenage years. I got to college and I did do a couple summers in college where I was effectively an intern for a USA swimming club. I would work the entire summer, work 7am-7pm, whatever this guy who owned the club told me to do. There was a lot of miscellaneous stuff that I was doing over the course of those days. I really wanted to be a swim coach in college but when I got to my senior year I was kind of stymied in that effort. I just couldn't breakthrough anywhere. I had also worked on being a teacher because I had some sense that I would be stymied. I thought "Okay well I could go teach at a boarding school and I'll also be the swim coach there and that'll work." So, I went to go do that. I taught US History and Modern World History at an all boys' school in western Pennsylvania and I was their swim coach for 1 year. I did not like teaching at all. I wanted to just be a coach. At that point that I gave another try to be coaching in college, I caught on with a glorified volunteer assistant coach position. I got paid \$150 a month but I was so excited. So, into it and really trying to soak it up and make my way into college. I did that for 2 years at the [REDACTED] and then I was able to get a full-time job assistant coach at [REDACTED]. That was also super exciting moving into a power conference and actually sort of making a living off coaching. I had a really fun time coaching there. I was there for 4 years and was able to carve out a little niche for myself coaching there. Then I had a feeling that I wanted to move on and also be a little bit adventurous-try something new. I agreed to let my name get floated out a bit in Denmark. Half my family is Danish. I ended up securing a job in Denmark to coach. The job I spent 9 months of my life preparing to go to over there I only was at for 3 months. It was a total disaster in terms of what I had expected and what it actually was. I ended up taking a head coaching job for another team there. I worked that job for 2 years with quite a bit of success. I was on the Danish Junior National Team both years. Also pulled up for one meet for a national team trip. I ended up getting fired from the job at the beginning of the 3rd year. Then, I worked as a consultant for another Danish club until her whole family moved back to the US in the fall of 2016. Since then I've been running my own business doing private lessons, private instruction and also speaking engagement workshops built around positive psychology with swim teams.

Q: What kinds of directives, ruled, and procedures does your organization that your involved with provide to guide the actions of coaches?

A: USA swimming has a code of conduct that they've made various editions to especially over the last 10 years. We are provided with some training in that code of conduct.

Q: Do you have any expectations or guidelines that your athletes are expected to follow?

A: Yes. I would say in that respect it's more general in terms of coming to practice, showing up on time to practice, the way that they end up interacting with me, the kinds of conversations we

have around their swimming both in and out of practice. It's pretty short, I would say. It's probably a page of that sort of stuff.

Q: Have you ever experienced a situation during your coaching career in which you had to make a difficult decision or had to resolve a difficult situation? Please feel free to give multiples if you need to.

A: I can tell you one that immediately comes to mind was when I was coaching at [REDACTED] I had a swimmer that I was coaching, and he was actually the one swimmer that I ended up coaching all 4 years. He had come to [REDACTED] with the intention of studying a particular major. I have a hard time remembering exactly what major it was, but he got there, he had his freshman year, he was struggling academically. He came to us as a coaching staff, myself and the head coach, and said "I would like to change my major." We didn't have a written rule that you couldn't take certain majors, but there was an unwritten expectation that certain majors were out of bounds. The one he wanted to change to was out of bounds. The reason it was out of bounds was that it had 2 afternoon studios associated with it. He wanted to do industrial design. I remember my boss, my head coach saying, "Well I guess that's the end of him being on our team." I felt really conflicted about that. I felt like we shouldn't kick this guy off the team because he wants to pursue a major. He's here he should be able to take whatever major he wants. I volunteered. I said "I'll coach him at a different time on those days. So, he'll still practice but he'll swim with me in the morning and that's how we'll make it work with the studios." That's what we ended up doing and certainly the conflict about it didn't end there because I was making this special exception for this person. That same exception wasn't necessarily being made for other people on the team.

Q: Related to that example, what ended up being the impact of your decision?

A: The swimmer ended up competing all 4 years for us and he actually qualified for the NCAA championships. He was our only qualifier for the NCAA championships in the senior year. Individually, he performed quite well and thrived under that change. In the end I felt really good that we had done it, but it was a source of continued conflict between myself and my boss, for sure.

Q: Can you explain to me why you chose to handle the situation in the way that you did?

A: Prior to working in college swimming, I myself was a college swimmer in Division 3 and in a special kind of Division 3 setting there were a lot of institutional rules that prevented coaches from dictating what we want to do academically. There were definitely way more where I swam in college than at [REDACTED]. I liked those rules. That had become part of my value set. I was pretty surprised that things were so different both at [REDACTED] and then [REDACTED] and it just didn't seem right to me that we were going to do that. Especially since it felt strange. It wasn't a written-out policy. It seemed like there was a reason why we didn't write it down because he knew it wasn't right. But we were still going to enforce some unwritten thing anyway just because we could, and that didn't seem right to me.

Q: What do you believe the duties and responsibilities of a coach are?

A: I think the coach really first and foremost should be ensuring that the people that show up have a good experience participating in the sport. That essentially you have people who are volunteering their time. It's time they could be doing something else. It should be a good experience for them. Everything else kind of flows from that. I believe coaches should help athletes to improve their form in the way that they swim and that would definitely make for a better experience for them. The overarching value is people should have a good experience when they're coming to do this activity of their own volition.

Q: Would you describe your coaching style to be modeled after a coach that you had in your past as an athlete?

A: I would say probably not one coach. I would say a group of coaches. Even I would say I find this all the time that I have little pieces of things from coaches that at large I would not model myself after them at all. Some of the worst coaches I had, I do have some aspect of what I feel is modeled by them.

Q: Would you like to elaborate on what part of those you modeled yourself after?

A: My college swim coach, he was definitely one of the worst coaches I ever had. One of the things that he did though that I really liked was we had a year we were supposed to go on training trip. We would go on training trip every winter. I hated training trip because there was always an outsized expectation of how we were going to perform. I was already sort of red lining right back at home, so I couldn't ramp it up to another level. I would get exhausted and frustrated when I went on these training trips. We had one year where a hurricane destroyed the pool we were supposed to go to, so we stayed home. Because we stayed home, I think my coach was feeling really insecure about whether we were going to "have fun." We did all sorts of stuff. We went to dinners out and had social occasions hanging around campus. He also made us compete in this totally cheesy inter-team Olympics, so we were assigned fake countries and we had to do stuff like a pull up contest or silly relays where we swam to the other end and chucked a Coca Cola and swam back to the other side. A lot of stuff like that. I thought it made things really fun. I ended up doing that all 4 years at [REDACTED]. I would get a little annoyed because the other coaches wouldn't really help me with it, but they would all be like "Do it! Do it!" and the swimmers were like "Come on, can we do the Olympics this year?" That was what made me come back to doing it. That's an example of someone. I didn't know if you were looking for an example from the coaches that I modeled myself more largely on.

Q: Do you believe that teaching ethics to coaches would make a change in the ethical wellbeing of the coach?

A: I would like to think so. I have a part of me that thinks so and part of me that doesn't. Part of me says of course because there's quite a bit of ignorance around it and to the extent that we can do something about ignorance of ethics I think we will improve it. But I do also think that there will be people who hear about ethics and get that sort of education, but they will continue to do as they please because they have already sort of accepted themselves to plenty of rules. So why wouldn't these other rules not also really apply to them?

Q: Finally, besides rules and regulations, are there any other guidelines that describe what is expected of coaches.

A: I don't think so.

Q: None that you know of outside of rules and regulations basically within organizations?

A: I think there's nothing formal. There's a lot of people penning a paper or two or a speech or two about 'This is what being a coach means', but nothing terribly formalized.

**APPENDIX M**  
**INTERVIEWEE C3 TRANSCRIPT**

Q: Could you provide a brief overview of your experiences as a coach?

A: I played softball as a catcher in college and was a psychology major. I didn't really know what I wanted to do. When I graduated, I went and worked at a therapy school for a year and a half in Virginia. I liked it and I thought I was going to do something with social work and psychology or working with troubled youth and I realized that was not for me. I close my eyes and said, "What am I going to do for the rest of my life?" I had such an amazing experience in college as an athlete and I had a really great coach. I wanted to be a college coach, so I started taking the steps. I ended up going to grad school and got my Masters. I did Sports Studies in college and I was an assistant coach for 2 different schools associated and then completed my master's work. I was very confident in myself and I was 26 years old. I said, "I'm ready to be a head coach!" So, I applied for head coaching jobs and I got the job at [REDACTED] in Virginia. I was very young and very naive and said, "Sweet this is my first coaching job." I moved to Virginia and I was there for 2 years and it was so much harder than I thought being a head coach. I was in charge of all these things. I had to make all these decisions and take care of all these players. It was overwhelming. I learned a lot of lessons around what not to do. I learned how to deal with negativity and criticism and things like that. I got the opportunity to coach at [REDACTED] which is where I went to undergrad. I was the assistant there. I didn't take much of a pay cut. I was an assistant coach for 2 years and it was fantastic because when I went from a head coach to an assistant coach, which was tough, I learned a lot. I was able to embrace more of my coaching skills because I didn't have all the stress of putting a schedule and a budget and things like that. After my time at [REDACTED] I was a different person. After 2 years at [REDACTED], I started looking for other head coaching jobs and then the [REDACTED] job came up and [REDACTED] is in the same conference as [REDACTED] so I was very familiar with it. I never wanted to coach at [REDACTED] because they had a terrible softball program. The administration was very persistent in pursuing me, so I finally ended up applying and going for an interview and I actually loved it. I just finished my third year and I love it here. Building a softball program here has been very hard, very stressful. The three months in the season I am a different person. I am mean to people and am constantly stressed, constantly tired but it's worth it. I love the recruiting part and it's something I'm really good at. That's what is needed at [REDACTED]. When I started a lot of players were not out there, which was scary. We played with nine or ten so there were no back-ups, no subs. Last year was 18 on the roster which is the biggest roster that [REDACTED] has ever had. I'm bringing in 5 this year so I have 19 on the roster next year. I'm really excited. [REDACTED] has never had a winning record or made it to the conference tournament, so those are my goals as the coach of [REDACTED].

Q: What kinds of directives, rules, and procedures does your college provide you to guide your actions?

A: We have a manual so that kind of lays everything out. The scary thing at [REDACTED] is we don't go over it and we're expected to just read it and abide by it. I'm a rules person so I do. How we should be handling budget and booking trips and paperwork and things like that. Those are pretty much laid out in the manual. We have an administrative team that we come to with questions about any issues that arise. We have them to talk to and they're able to either give us the answer or point us in the right direction. In terms of our governing bodies, NSCA is our governing body. As you become a member we get the rulebook every year and we're expected to abide by the rules of coaching softball. They do a good job of keeping us updated on rules. There's this new



rule from the past couple of years, especially in terms of the playing field. We've had updates to our playing field. We have a compliance officer at [REDACTED] because we have to have someone who is in charge of compliance. They do a good job of passing on especially important ones that we need to be compliant with especially with the NCAA.

Q: Q: Do you personally have any expectations or guidelines that your athletes are expected to follow?

A: Yes absolutely. In this day and age, it's kind of scary to coach, I'm not going to lie, because at [REDACTED] we deal with a lot of players who come from a very wealthy background. They have a lot of money and they are used to getting their way and parents just throw money at people until they get their way. Once they get into college, especially at the collegiate level, we have to really be careful. I never usually have a meeting without my assistant coach. I'm not going to stay and have a one-on-one meeting with a player. A player can twist your words and you always want a third person there to make sure your protecting yourself. Last year I put together a program manual with all the expectations; general expectations, academic expectations, practice expectations, game day expectations. I'm really proud of it I think it's awesome. We're using that as a guide. Last year was my first year that I've ever done anything like that. We had someone come to our campus, [REDACTED], to talk about the current climate of collegiate athletics and how we have to protect ourselves because again people can make claims and turn into something really big. I made a manual and presented it to the team and it went really well. Again, I just laid out our values and our expectations, our guidelines. I think the team was on board with it. It helps them too for it to be written down, so they know exactly what is expected of them. This year our athletic director actually just emailed like 2 days ago and is now requiring everyone in this department to write a manual. That way when we make decisions about playing time or removing a player from a team, we have that written documentation. We had a lot of drama with captains last year. What happened was someone wasn't chosen as captain and she was never going to be a captain because she wasn't captain material and wasn't voted by her teammates as a captain. It escalated into something I would have never predicted. She ended up filing a suit against me that I discriminated against her because she had ADD and that's why I didn't make her a captain. It was discriminating against a disability, so she filed a complaint with that title. It was really ridiculous, and they had to do an investigation. Luckily, I kept the ballet, so our Title IX coordinator said, "Send me the ballet that will be easy". No discrimination was filed because that was ridiculous, but it was the scariest thing. That's kind of the climate we are coaching in right now. I added a captain expectation. I laid out the process for how we're going to determine captains, what is expected of the captain and what it looks like being a captain so that's hopefully to prevent the situation from happening. Personally, it was really crazy, and both her parents are lawyers. I thought it would be done and I would never see her again. A week ago, my athletic director called me and she was like "Hey do you still have the ballets?" I said, "Yes why?" Apparently, her lawyer contacted [REDACTED] lawyer and was threatening a litigation. That's the climate we're coaching in, so you have to be very careful and write everything down and document everything and protect ourselves.

Q: What was the impact of the decision that you made on how to handle that specific situation?

A: We checked in a lot with our captains. Unless that player told her teammates, what was going on none of the teammates would have known. I acted like nothing was wrong and I didn't treat her any differently which was the hardest thing for me to do. All I wanted to do was not interact with her because I was like "Are you kidding me? I can't believe I have to deal with this." I still had to coach her. I guess I've grown a lot. I didn't want to treat her badly, but I wanted to ignore her. I couldn't because she was on my team. I don't think it had an impact on the team at all. It definitely a strain on me and after the season I was like "Is coaching really for me? Do I really want to coach? Is it really worth it to deal with 18-22-year old's who think that they are owed something?" Something I've never dealt with before was someone really reacting badly about not being a captain. I'm proud of myself for being able to continue to coach her. It made the season very difficult of having to have her still on the team after she was saying that I discriminated against her.

Q: Do you believe you model yourself by a coach that you had in your past?

A: My most influential coach was the coach I had my first year of college. I only had her for one year before she left. She had such a positive impact on me. I don't know that I model myself after her but the way she impacted me is how I want to impact other people's lives. She gave me so much confidence and she was so supportive, and she was so positive. We are pretty similar. We actually are still really close, and we played each other this year which was so cool getting to coach against her. It's funny because as a player you don't know what goes on behind the scenes so seeing her now as a coach and me as a coach, she's actually pretty crazy. She's not very organized at all and I'm not like that. She is always trying to always get me to come out to California and coach with her because she wants to be co-head coaches because she's so fun and likes to do the social things and she doesn't like to do the organizational things. It would be a good match for each other. She's played such a huge role even though I only had her for one year. She's still a mentor for me.

Q: What do you believe the duties and responsibilities of a coach are?

A: I take it really seriously. I convince people to come to [REDACTED] to play softball for me. [REDACTED] is an amazing school, but some have never heard of [REDACTED] until I reach out to them. I get to know them through the screening process, when they're juniors in high school. We coach them for 4 years obviously but we kind of get to know them for over six years. We get to know their parents; their parents trust us. As a coach I think it's my job to challenge them and push them to become the best possible softball player they can be, which I think I do a great job of that. It's great to see the improvement from their freshman year to their senior year. I think the most important role is we're there to guide them and help them grow as people and help them develop their character and put them in challenging situations and help with their leadership skills. When they graduate, and none of my players are going on to play professional softball. People who do play professional softball in the Olympics you can't have a career out of it unless you're Jenny Fields or Jessica Mendoza or something. We want to prepare them for doing great things in the world. I think that's another big job that I have. In addition, obviously our job is to run a collegiate softball program. As a coach I get to play a little role in shaping them to hopefully be an amazing person that can get a great job or go to grad school and hopefully donate money back to the softball program.

Q: Do you believe that teaching ethics to coaches would make a change?

A: I don't really know. My grad program was a really unique program called 'Sports Studies' designed specifically for coaches. There's nothing like it in the country. All of the classes surrounded coaching, so we had a coaching ethics class. I think you are who you are, and you follow rules if you have to. We have some shady coaches at [REDACTED] I'm not going to lie, and they do some shady things. They get by because they follow the rules they have to follow. Our baseball group, for example, produces douchebags. They're terrible people because of their coach. Our athletic director is aware, and she is trying to make changes. He has to follow the same rules I do, but we're different people. I said yes originally but maybe it's no now that I think about it.

Q: Finally, besides rules and regulations, are there any other guidelines that describe what is expected of coaches.

A: There is a job description. You have that and when you are hired you are expected to follow guidelines. I probably couldn't tell you what they were in my actual job description. We also have other rules and responsibilities outside of the job description. Besides our department manual and our job description, I don't know that our governing body necessarily has a manual on guidelines on what's expected. I think that's more up to the individual institution.

**APPENDIX O**  
**INTERVIEWEE C4 TRANSCRIPT**

Q: Could you provide a brief overview of your experiences as a coach?

A: Just completed my 35th year coaching college and my 20th year here. We've had some years where I've had some challenges competitively. The past 5 years have been the best years in the history of the baseball program. [REDACTED] is a unique place because we're not about winning national championships, we're all very under-resourced from a scholarship standpoint. I think it's unusual in that our focus is on coaching and winning games but at the same time maybe even more so than most places what the experience for the student athlete is like as a whole. I think I've been in a unique place for a long time in that regard. Winning is important, but people are losing their jobs if they're winning under .500 for 5 years in a row.

Q: Could you describe your experiences within the Olympic organization as a coach?

A: We had success winning a gold medal in 2000 and a bronze in 2008. Just the experience of being involved with international athletes around the world in the U.S. was most extraordinary. The level of detail, organization, logistical things they pulled off in the Olympic games was impressive to watch from afar. I wear a very single-minded purpose when we go from a baseball perspective. It was a second-to-none kind of experience for me.

Q: Within both those organizations are there any directives, rules, and procedures that you're provided to guide your actions as a coach?

A: From a compliance standpoint, making sure we're following NCAA rules certainly institutional guidelines in regard to alcohol, team disciplinary procedures. There are certainly rules we need to pay attention to from the Olympic perspective. Same thing, pretty direct. More toward the athletes than the coaches, but the coaches were aware of procedures. Before we went to Australia and Beijing every coach goes to a 3 day or 2 days debriefing as to what the Olympic experience is going to be like. There may be country-specific rules we had to pay attention to and certainly USOC-specific rules. Broad based things. Certainly, here at the college we're permitted to create our own set of guidelines as we see fit as coaches.

Q: Do you have any expectations or guidelines that your athletes are expected to follow?

A: In baseball we have one rule and, pardon my French, but my one rule is don't f\*\*\* up. That allows me the capability of interpreting situations that may occur because I've been in places of a system where we tried to have a penalty for each possible circumstance and it just didn't work. We have the general conversation of what is expected of them at the front end, but I wouldn't really hand out a list of rules. There's some basic things we do on the field as far as dress. As far as discipline-type scenarios and rules off the field that's basically don't screw up. That gives me some flexibility, they can interpret easily what that means. We certainly educate them about illegal substances, drugs, alcohol, etc... Sometimes if a player has a misstep a lot of penalties will be driven by what the college policy is. If it's something more involved, I always reach out to our athletic director for his guidance and then a couple situations. We've been lucky it hardly ever happens. It may involve folks on the other side of campus to help guide how a situation was going to unfold.

Q: Have you ever experienced a situation during your coaching career in which you had to make a difficult decision or had to resolve a difficult situation?

A: I'm lucky I don't have a whole library to go through in my head. We had a situation where we had some players get pulled over by our town police and there was marijuana in the car. There were 5 players, and this was probably 5 years ago. I was alerted to that by multiple sources on campus when that happened. The first thing I did was communicate with our athletic director to be aware of it as well and talk through it. We took our time understanding the circumstances involved. One of them had a misstep previously in a campus situation, so over the course of a few weeks we had a conversation with our captains to get some insight from them. But primarily with our athletic director and folks across campus we came to a decision on each of them. I think 3 of our players were involved, there were 5 in the vehicle. All 3 of the penalties were different based on what their histories had been and what the circumstances of the situation were. We obviously talked to the town police and campus police to make sure everyone was on the same page. We moved swiftly in a sense that we didn't let it linger for 2 months. Folks who were paying attention to how we were going to react saw that we reacted quickly. We, by design, didn't publicize what the penalties were to each athlete. If our players on the team knew specifically what happened to player as penalty or player Bs penalty, that was strictly because of conversations we had internally. Nothing was publicized.

Q: What was the impact of your decision on how you handled the situation?

A: My sense was good. I actually received some unsolicited feedback via email saying, "I appreciated how you handled that." One of them had a misstep earlier in the year so his penalty was different from the others. It involved significant suspension from games for 2 of the 3. Folks responded favorably to the fact that we were barely severe. Until I'm told differently I'm always going to air on the side of being too severe. We had a situation a number of years ago where we had a player that I wanted to dismiss from the team or I was close to it. I was counseled by the higher ups that I probably didn't need to do that. I think it was directly related to the fact to the positive impact that athlete could have with our team in the field.

Q: What do you believe the duties and responsibilities of an athletic coach are?

A: I actually just had this conversation with a group Saturday night for a rainy weekend and we kind of talked about that relative to [REDACTED]. Your task is to provide your athletes with an environment in which they can compete in as successfully as possible. Each institution is going to dictate. Here at [REDACTED] specifically, number one you're going to do everything you'd normally do preparing athletes to compete the best they can. It is essential that you provide a correct experience for that athlete, not to the point where they're telling me how to run practice but when they leave their athletic venue they are able to be the student they want to be, be able to pursue other areas that are of interest to them without it impacting their preparation athletically. Coaches will lose their job here not because they didn't win enough contests but because the athletes weren't having the right experience. That's a really open interpretation. I think it's a challenging one administratively to interpret but that's critical. Athletes know when coaches are working at it. I think we're all much more aware as to how we talk to athletes nowadays. The

Vince Lombardi/Bobby Knight approach isn't going to fly anymore. At the same time, kids want to be pushed and challenged. They want to be put in an environment where they'll be prepared to win.

Q: Do you consider yourself to have modeled your coaching style to a coach that you had in your past?

A: I've always been the antithesis to the Bobby Knight style. I'm very balanced, calm, non-confrontational. If I go in and start throwing chairs across the clubhouse they're going to say, "What's wrong with this guy?" I certainly get pointed with athletes but if I'm going to yell at a player or raise my voice at a contest or practice it's going to be relative to a specific play. If I talk to them 10 minutes later, they should have no indication that I'm even thinking about that. That's my personality. I've never played for a coach who was the Lombardi type. My dad was a longtime coach and he was pretty calm, confront things when they needed to be confronted. I'll throw words at you but I'm never going to direct inappropriate language. I'm more aware as to what I say even in casual environments to athletes and how things can be interpreted. It can be something socially not even relative to a play.

Q: Could you define ethics for me?

A: I think its individual interpretation as to what is ethical in life and that is probably enhanced by how your institution you work for interprets that. It probably trickles down as a coach to what is considered ethical in your sport. There are certainly things that are considered unethical. Hopefully as an athletic department or a college we are hiring people who are ethical. That's a little open-ended as far as to the specifics of what that would mean.

Q: Do you believe if we were required to do ethical training for coaches that it would make change in the way that they react to situations?

A: I don't think ethical is the word I would use. I keep referring to the Bobby Knight-Lombardi approach. Coaches need to be alerted or made aware that type of approach isn't well received as it was in the old days. However, you title it, I think making coaches aware of the changing environment of student athletics culturally now is important. You have to find out about a coach's style before they get here. I think part of that too is when you're hiring folks you're trying to dig and get a sense of their style as they're coming in if you're doing a good job vetting candidates. I'm enrolling into an administrative position in July and you got to find out the coach's style as best as they can before they get here.

Q: Finally, besides rules and regulations, are there any other guidelines that describe what is expected of coaches.

A: Nothing that's written. I think the person doing the hiring is going to have a feel as to the person they're getting. I think it's important that there's an outline for your candidates 'Here's what we expect here.' I think everybody is looking for the same kind of individual, and that is broad based. Texas, I just read an article about them today, how every sport there is expected to compete for national championships. They shouldn't compromise "This guy is kind of a bad egg,

but I think they could win national championships.” I think exclusive of where the wins and losses are, we all want the same type of person.



**APPENDIX P**  
**INTERVIEWEE C5 TRANSCRIPT**

Q: Could you provide a brief overview of your experiences as a coach?

A: I started coaching fairly young. I was a part of a fencing club. We only had one coach and the club got really big very quickly. I was asked to lead practice because I knew how to do warm-ups, I knew how to lead drills, I knew what our coach expected of us at practice. I was a little kid helping them out during practice and eventually our club kept growing and our coach needed to give private lessons. She would let me run practices on my own while she was giving lessons. From there, I did that for about a year and then she felt I should get some formal training. This was back in the Coaches' College day for USA fencing, I went there and got a formal education there. I did that for a couple of summers. I got certified in all 3 weapons. I loved getting certified because I got more responsibilities with the club. I was maybe 13-14 at the time when this all started. I progressed and became of college age and I went to my college club where I was the coach there and I decided not to compete in the NCAA. He was a volunteer, so he allowed me to more or less run the club as I saw fit. Then I graduated from that college, came back and became an assistant coach at the club I started at in an officially paid position. We kept growing and cultivating different programs from how we create beginners and shape them from doing nothing to something to taking our lead athletes from where they are to progress them. At that point we were aiming to create college fencers at the Division 1 level which we were able to create during my time period working there. Then I got to transition as a Division 1 coach and then it became "How do you take someone who is supposedly at the peak of their career, coming in at their highest level to push them even further or at least maintain?" How can we maintain that highest level? What can we add to that maybe they're not used to and things like that. That's currently where I am in my coaching career.

Q: What kinds of rules and procedures does US Fencing provide to guide you as a coach?

A: Like most rules there's a lot of 'Don't's'. US Fencing itself did not have a formal training program for its coaching staff at all. The coaching staff- It's coaches that work under their supervision. "This is how we expect you to teach people. "This is the type of program we expect." They leave that side of the Dos and how things get done up to the coaches. The only thing they give us guidelines for are 'Don't's'. The idea of SafeSport, abuse, sexual harassment, mental abuse, physical abuse all those things that are terrible and are wrong, those are the main things they give us guidelines for. This is what they define as mental abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse all those things. They define those and give us guidelines for "If you do this, this will happen." But how to run a practice they don't give you too much guidelines at all or rules for it at all.

Q: Could you follow up with that in comparing it to the NCAA?

A: For the NCAA they have similar type of Don'ts, but they spend more time on emphasizing the athlete's health and well-being. They limit us to the number of hours we can work with them or they limit the number of structured hours. So, many hours can be done in the weight room. So many hours can be done in practice. So many hours can be used in one-on-one instruction. So many hours can be done for travel and competition. So many hours can be done for anything team-related. There's a lot more structure of how we can structure our practices. I will say this, and this is my own observation-Just talking with other coaches, while there are these structures

written out by the NCAA not all teams follow it at all. The NCAA limits structured hours where coaches can be involved. There's a captains' practice-you don't have to be present for that. They can start exceeding the limits of the NCAA. But the NCAA's main structure is the number of hours we can really interact with them and how we can interact with them. What we do during those hours. Everything else they don't give any structure because they don't necessarily understand our sport and the NCAA is necessarily set up to promote the teaching of sports.

Q: Do you have any expectations or guidelines that your athletes are expected to follow?

A: The NCAA does have certain things-Things you can and cannot do. As a team we set up our own culture, so we set up our own rules and regulations, but we have expectations of them, as you said, that we do set up. We have a manual for our team every year. They have a final page that says, "I agree to these rules and regulations."

Q: Have you ever experienced a situation during your coaching career in which you had to make a difficult decision or had to resolve a difficult situation?

A: Of course. One of our beliefs and one of the things that we talk about on our team is handle things while it's small and there's no issue and heresy doesn't count. When you have a large group of women in close quarters at all times, there's going to be drama. You can't avoid it, you can't help it, it's going to be there. We had inner-team bickering and to some point that it started to affect the team. Small things were said, and things were taken out of context. The last time it happened it actually got to the point that it split the team right down the middle, everyone taking sides. The way we handle it, we handle in 2 steps: We brought the whole team together and the head coach made a statement about how we are a family. "We don't condone any-we call it locker room talk-we don't condone that at all. If there is an issue with someone it must be discussed one-on-one. This will not be tolerated. We will not tolerate people making other people feel uncomfortable to be around each other. This is not what we're about. You have a problem-you don't have to like each other but you have to learn to live with each other. That is how it's going to be. You will not make your teammates feel uncomfortable or have to pick sides." After that statement, which was much more eloquently put by her, we then actually asked everyone to leave the room except the two who were involved in this. We sat them down and said "Look, this cannot happen. We heard the different sides of the story and of course people love gossip and they love to talk to each other and they forget sometimes coaches are standing there," which is ironic. They start talking about things that they probably wouldn't have wanted us to hear or wanted to know. "We will explain our part and what we have heard and then we would like for you to explain your side of the story but with the other person sitting there and you will tell us and then the other person will have a chance to tell their side and we will try to meet in the middle here." They got to talk to each other. Just through a simple conversation they found that one comment that was made was blown out of proportion and literally the words were changes. We said "Look, we understand you are saying this in front of us so there is no way to be sure you're telling us the truth or that you're just trying to save face in front of the coaches because ultimately we decide what we do with the athletes. But, the second half of this is we hope that you two understand that we want you to grow into good people. You're only here for 4 years and you're going to move on. We hope that you look back and look at them as friends, as

family. Even if you're just saving face hopefully you two will learn to work together." We offered them access to our sports psychologist for them to talk to. "If you want to talk more, please talk to us, talk to each other but this cannot impact the team." This whole process took about a month because we couldn't figure out what was going on with our team and eventually we were able to figure out a few different information and talking to people that this all led back to comments made on a Friday night. It's ridiculous, but this is how we handled the situation. Apparently, this process isn't new to our head coach. That's why we use it because we put everything out there and it has worked for her in the past.

Q: What do you believe the duties and responsibilities of a coach are?

A: When we get athletes, we want to help them improve in some way. There's no reason that an athlete should come to college and leave a worse athlete. If they get hurt because of our coaching and our teaching, we put them in a risky situation and we pushed them too much at practice. That's obviously on us. We should be approaching it in a healthy and stable manner to help them progress to at least leave on the same level. Help them maintain their top abilities as when they came in. We hope they get better, stronger, faster, something. But that's one thing they should leave the same or better than they came in with no injuries and no issues there. They should leave a better person. Obviously, the hope of all coaches, at least for college, is that they leave with a degree. They'll be better there in theory. But we want them to leave as a better person as a whole in general. We don't want them to leave as scarred, morbid individual who hates everybody. We create our athletes to become better members of society to move forward whether or not they're leaving as artists, or a doctor. We want to make them a better person as a whole to help improve life. We work with student athletes. We want them to be successful athletically, academically and community-wise as well.

Q: Do you believe your coaching style is modeled after someone that coaches you?

A: Yes, ironically enough. My initial coach was also coached by the head coach I work with now so there's this nice little trickle-down thing. I also believe that I model a lot of my coaching beliefs after my first coach ever as a kid, my dad. He taught me the hard work and if I try hard, win or lose, I'm going to feel good about myself. Nobody like to lose, but losing without giving your maximum effort, losing without trying your best is just the worst. You can lose and can learn a lot from loss. Yes, I believe so and I think it comes from multiple areas from different people throughout my life that helped me. I definitely feel I'm a combination of at least 3 or 4 coaches probably.

Q: Can you define ethics for me?

A: I'll just use the analogy that being able to do something-if it was printed on a newspaper you wouldn't mind handing that newspaper to your grandparents. Being able to look yourself in the mirror after you've done something and agreeing that you held yourself to the best standard possible. Golden rule and all those wonderful things.

Q: Do you believe if we taught ethics to coaches it would make changes in the way coaches treat athletes.

A: Some yes, some no. I think a lot of it will have to deal with showing the benefits of using the ethics. A lot of older coaches, especially the famous sport of fencing-obviously a lot of old Russians who taught the same way or Ukrainians taught the same way for years, decades and they've always got the same results so why should they change. A lot of coaches need to have results. If there is a way to show the pairing of ethics with results, I think people would listen. Would they necessarily change? I would hope small things may change. Small ways that they approach situations at a minimum. I think it helps. I can't say with certainty that someone would change. I would hope they would, but you never know.

Q: Besides rules and regulations that you discussed prior, are there any other guidelines that describe what is expected of coaches in your chosen sport?

A: Again, to a certain extent, it's more results. Nowhere does it say that you have to create good athletes. A lot of people I know-the fact of you can't do this or that- there's a lot of expected results, good results. Beyond that, not really.

**APPENDIX Q**  
**INTERVIEWEE C6 TRANSCRIPT**

Q: Could you provide a brief overview of your experiences as a coach?

A: I started coaching about 20 years ago and had a rec center program. In 2002 I started assistant coaching in [REDACTED] helping just a little bit with the team. In 2004 my wife took over as head coach and I became very involved in helping coach the team, as an Associate Head Coach. I did that for the last 14 years.

Q: What kinds of directives, rules and procedures does your organization provide you to guide your actions as a coach?

A: Compliance is important and always simplifies. We have our NCAA Division 2 manual that gives all the rules. Our policies and procedures for the department, for the longest time, were by word of mouth before putting in writing. That's more of the procedures on how to file paperwork, how to document this. They do other training that they're very big on- diversity inclusion. They did training on concussions. They had some really good training on that. Those are ones that come to mind and I'm sure I'm forgetting some.

Q: Do you have any expectations or guidelines that your athletes are expected to follow?

A: Yes. At the beginning of each season the first team meeting we go over our team rules. They're on our philosophy of why we're doing what we're doing. What our expectations are for practice, for staying out of trouble, for drugs/alcohol.

Q: Have you ever experienced a situation during your coaching career in which you had to make a difficult decision or had to resolve a difficult situation?

A: I don't know if it's as big a situation as maybe what you're alluding to but we do have problems on the team. We've done really well I think as far as having alcohol problems on the team. We had probably 3 or 4 incidents during the 14 years which is pretty small. It requires bringing them to the side, talking about their behavior, and there's consequences to their actions. That's something we do, by the department, it's administered by us. I don't know if that's the type of thing you're talking about. We have other smaller, light issues-conflicts on the team about who's going to be squad captain, who's going to be team captain. People get upset about that. We've had issues caused by--we had one big issue last year calling for the athletic directors too. One of our athletes had an eating disorder and we didn't really see it. In the end we brought her to our trainers and our athletic trainers caused our athlete to quit the team, which we weren't happy about. That was a conflict between us and our trainers. We had another one this year where they pulled someone out of competition completely healthy. So we had conflicts like that. I guess as a coach you're in this middle position between athletic department and your athletes. We play this role in between the 2 and our default position is to be on the side of our athletes and our job is to make it easy for them to perform to the best of their ability. The department, most of the time they're doing functions that help us do that job and sometimes they're not and that's what causes conflicts.

Q: What was the impact of your decision on the way you chose to address the problem?

A: It's led me to step up on how I'm going to protect my athletes from--when the problems come from the department whether it's the trainers or administrators down towards us they like to micromanage. They're distant but they try to manage what goes on with the team. I guess last year led me to be a stronger advocate for athletes. We felt what they're doing is not appropriate.

Q: What do you believe the duties and responsibilities of a coach are?

A: That's a huge question. Can you narrow that a little bit?

Q: You discussed the advocacy of your athletes. You discussed being the middle person between your athletes and your trainers and the athletic department itself. You basically state the fact that your responsibility would be to your athletes.

A: I don't want to over-emphasize that. The majority of what we do hopefully is not conflict-resolution, it's making steps to grow. I guess how I'd answer it is--sports is a competitive environment. I have these really basic rules to get your kid into a competition and have them succeed. That's sort of your mission to do. As you do that mission, a lot of other good. I think the value of athletics come to fruition. Things like promoting teamwork, promoting discipline, self-discipline that the athletes strive to excel. Promoting the ability to work with others, promoting focus on task, also compartmentalizing each task so you can go from one task to the other whether it's in a competition, being an athlete or a student. So, you're transitioning back and forth very quickly from one thing to the other, sometimes studying on the bus to or from the tournament. In the athletic competition you really have a holistic adoption of a person, which is your student athlete. That's under fruition of why we do coaching.

Q: Do you believe you model yourself by a coach that you had in your past?

A: I'm a fencing coach, so you talk very specific things to coaching-strategy of how you got started. There's 1 coach I had who helped me. There's another part of it which is more technique, the art of fencing. I think that's a bigger question you're asking. How you manage a team, how you lead a team, organize a team and things like that. My background is I was an officer a [REDACTED], I was an [REDACTED], I was a captain for a major airline so all of those give you leadership opportunities. I have a lot of weight to bear on how I coach. The other thing was as a flight instructor I did one-on-one development. I use a lot of what I learned as a flight instructor. There's a lot of life experience that you bring to coaching.

Q: Can you define ethics in your own words?

A: The structure you bring to morality is determining what you ought to do. Ethics is more the structure of how you do that.

Q: Do you believe that teaching ethics to coaches would make a change in the way they act toward their athletes?



A: Some yes. Some coaches I really respect in the ethics they bring to their coaching. There are others that do a bad job and if you put them in a class it might not change them. I do think there's a group of coaches who, with ethics training would be very helpful in the way they coach.

Q: Finally, besides rules and regulations, are there any other guidelines that describe what is expected of coaches.

A: We have coaches forums where you interact with other coaches. When I was first starting to coach at [REDACTED], that actually helped a lot. There's not as much of that going on.

**APPENDIX R**  
**INTERVIEWEE C7 TRANSCRIPT**

Q: Could you provide a brief overview of your experience as a coach?

A: My players range from the younger kids up to high school. I've been able to experience the little ones, middle schoolers, that middle age where kids are still developing, and high school where we are fine tuning and continuing to develop what's already been established to be able to play themselves. That's the range of what I do.

Q: Could you describe your experience as an athlete?

A: It was the best experience I had. It was also really character building because it's like rolling the dice on who you actually get as a coach. They can present really well in the beginning but when it comes down to it when you get into coaching with them as an athlete, it can be difficult because some coaches confuse passion with instruction. It was definitely difficult because I recognized early on what good coaching looked like and I'm looking at my coach like "That's not a good coach". I was able to get out and go to another one but a lot of athletes...we just don't have any option. My experience overall was just great. I had an injury, but I got rehab, I got to see the world, got a great education paid for, and made some good friendships. I miss the sport to this day.

Q: What kinds of directives, rules or procedures does your athletic organization provide for athletes and coaches?

A: At the younger level it's all around sportsmanship, character. That has been the heavy emphasis I've seen that they're really trying to instill in the kids at a younger age. As you get toward the middle and high school grades it's a change. There's nothing that you can do that somebody is not going to see so it's like this unspoken rule. Don't do anything stupid. Don't post anything. Coaches would be surprised in programs that still haven't developed but particularly on the college level they actually had developed policies. It is written in black and white and you signed that you will not do this, you will not say anything negative, or you will not try to be negative. The higher you go, the more they put a stronghold on what you can and cannot do and can and cannot say either directly or indirectly. That's part of being a student/athlete.

Q: Do you have any expectations or guidelines that you as a coach would expect your athletes to follow?

A: I jump off the coaching methods of my grandpa and really base everything off of his foundation that he set. For me for my athletes, when you come in as an athlete it's sportsmanship, it's the courageousness, it's the leadership. Being able to be that one that leads everyone. It's those types of values, the integrity, that I expect as a coach and try to demonstrate as a coach. You have to lead by example. Those are the big ones that I use.

Q: During your athletic experience, were there any expectations or guidelines that your coaches expected you to follow?

A: I mean, we had a curfew. Other than the regular things in the student handbook, there wasn't an athletic code or contract that I can recall. I take that back. I do vaguely recall we did this thing

at the beginning where we discussed things like “Don’t take money from donors.” It was almost like a workshop or seminar where it took place at practice one day.

Q: Have you ever experienced a situation during you coaching or athletic career in which you had to make a difficult decision or had to resolve a difficult situation?

A: It’s funny to go back and actually think back to when I was playing. I did play one year at [REDACTED] where I blew out my knee and I wasn’t really ever going to be able to play again. It wasn’t a difficult decision for me back then, but it was probably not the best decision. My knee was pretty shredded at this point in my life but again back to the decision that I made to have doctors go and shoot my ankles, cortisone shots so I could play. Literally I could not walk. Semi-finals we won so it was something where if there had been any type of drug test it would have blown me, the coach, the trainer, the doctor, everybody. I made this decision because as an athlete at the stage all I wanted was to play and not necessarily take into consideration the condition of my knee twenty years down the line. If I tell you how painful it is now, it is not nice. You knew you shouldn’t have been doing it that was the whole point. No, you’re not supposed to put shots in your ankle, but you want to because you want to play in this game. That was probably one of the more difficult ones that I had. It was difficult that I had to leave [REDACTED]. It was a difficult situation that had to be resolved where there was confrontation with myself and the weight coach. I’ve had a lot of coaches, I knew what it was, and I needed to get myself out of that situation.

Q: What was the impact of the decision of leaving UW?

A: Personally, I left home. For me generally, the impact was that I was able to at least get a fair chance to take world as a player and to be on the top ten teams and be in that environment. That was one of the things.

Q: What do you believe the responsibilities and duties of a coach are?

A: They are heavy. Coaches have the ability to make a great player. Even if you have a good coach when you were young. Coaches have the ability to make or break players at that age. It’s been hard to just look at someone and say, “You are a coach”. It’s sacred, you are a teacher, you have to take that seriously, you have to understand that your words have impact. That is something that is generally a very easy thing to try to manipulate kids at a younger age, to break them down or discourage them. I just watched this special on a tennis coach. Seeing some of them at least try to have the mentality to fight through even when he realized he wasn’t number one. That’s the power of a coach. You can’t just break someone’s spirit and just walk away. It’s so much more than that. So much more. There ought to be a license, there ought to be a test. I don’t know what it should be but there’s got to be something because some of these people shouldn’t be around athletes at all.

Q: Do you model yourself after a coach from your past?

A: Absolutely. It’s not necessarily the specifics or particulars. I didn’t get my degree in theology or anatomy, but it was how Dr. Walker would treat his athletes. It was how he cared about his

athletes. It was who taught them, supported them, encouraged them. It was how he would treat athletes and how to get the best out of athletes. Those are the things I take away from him and I use everything. How he handles situations. My coaches were nowhere near as good, but I have had really great models from my grandpa to my mother watching her, watching a good coach. It's just been a pleasure. I can't talk enough of what they did and continue to emulate and be a model of what they have done and to keep it alive. It is important to keep these traits and characteristics of coaching and mentoring and don't let them fall by the wayside.

Q: Could you define ethics for me?

A: Ethics would be like the ability to make the hard decisions, to do what's right. To start being able to accept differences and still being able to have an optimistic approach about what it is you're doing. That would be my definition. I'm trying to think of somebody ethically and what did that person do.

Q: Do you believe that if we were to teach ethics in the coaching field it would change?

A: I think it would definitely help. I don't know if it would make a change but at least it would be putting forth more effort to get the word out and to get a fair image of what it looks like and what it could look like. Now it's a very different platform and I don't think ethics are in the top tier of things they are considering. Sometimes it's a forced thing, but generally I don't think it could hurt. It could help even if it only helps one.

Q: Besides rules and regulations, are there any other guidelines that describe what's expected as a coach.

A: I think it depends on where you are. I know places like the YMCA take you through a very...not necessarily rigorous but they really do lay out their expectations and we try to adhere by the values and mission statements and rules. Coaches have to go through a little bit more training to be aware of the specifics of what they are. I think there is that. The Y was a place where a chunk of time was given to that topic in terms of what you're expected to be as a coach. In high school, it was just "here sign this paper." It wasn't anything extra. It was more word-of-mouth. There wasn't necessarily an in-depth process of what they expected.

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